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THE STORY OF
SAINT ELIZABETH
OF HUNGARY

BY WILLIAM CANTON

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B. Elizabeth

Caston

Story of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary

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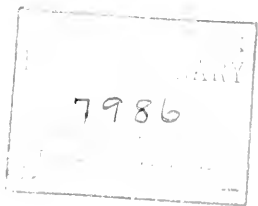
THE STORY OF
ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY



The Divine Playmate

THE STORY OF
SAINT ELIZABETH
OF HUNGARY
BY WILLIAM CANTON
AUTHOR OF "A CHILD'S BOOK OF
SAINTS," "W. V., HER BOOK"
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“Said Lao-Pay, ‘No coin has greater worth
Than what the land ’tis spent in has to sell ;
No words, whate’er their wisdom, more can tell
Than what the hearer’s wisdom understands.’”

Yu-Pei-Yu’s Lute.

JOY WANG
JUN
YANG

CB
E

TO
MAY MARGARET

“When did music come this way?
Was it yesterday?”

1. OY WOB
2. LUM
3. VRA PRL

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The Shower of Roses

SOME one speaks of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. A grey hill-castle rises from the mist and the snowy pines of the Thuringian forest, and a girlish figure appears on the frosty hill-track, letting fall from her apron a shower of angelic roses. She brings with her the freshness and colour of the summer dawn, and for a moment her simple sweetness illumines the confused dusky recesses of the Middle Ages.

To many readers the name of St. Elizabeth means now no more than this. It does not recall to them the winning four-year-old child taken from her royal home into a strange and distant land; the motherless little maid exposed to the derision of courtiers and the insolence of menials; the girl of nine or ten threatened with repudiation and

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a dishonoured return to her father. They do not think of her married in her fourteenth year ; widowed at twenty ; despoiled of everything, and driven forth by her kinsfolk in the depth of winter ; dead at twenty-four ; canonized four years later, and crowned in her shroud by an emperor. The rose-legend of her compassion they keep in memory ; they have forgotten the joyous subjection to an ideal of impassioned holiness, the surrender of a pure heart to spotless human affections, the sacrifice of all that the power and splendour of the world could give to an infinite pity for the miseries of the poor,—the humiliations, the sufferings, the sorrows, the early death, which make her story one of the most poignantly beautiful ever told.

Two years before her glad soul passed from earth, a lad was born at Apolda, beyond the ancient forest, on the north-eastern border of Thuringia. More than once his father may well have seen Elizabeth as she rode with her bright-haired Landgrave to

the stronghold of Neuenburg (Naumburg) on the hill overlooking the Saale Valley. Little Dietrich became in after-time “a most lowly and unworthy priest and friar” of St. Dominic’s Order of Preachers, grew into an ardent lover of her saintly memory, and longed to write her Life.

Many things had been recorded of her in the Little Book containing the recollections of her ladies at the Wartburg and two of her later attendants. There was also the letter in which her spiritual director, Conrad of Marburg, had described her life, death, and miracles to Pope Gregory IX. But these left much for an eager heart to desire. Details too familiar at the time to need mention—names, titles, persons, dates, and localities, the very colour and life indeed of the story, had been passed over in silence, and Dietrich saw that he must make good the omissions. He turned hopefully to various written Chronicles, read the commemorative sermons of this brother and that, and “finding no rest for the foot of his longing,” seized staff

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and ink-horn and set out upon a fervid quest.

One follows him, passionate pilgrim, among the hills and forests of Thuringen-land and far beyond ; visiting convents and monasteries, towns, burgs, rustic thorpes ; questioning the oldest of the old people on whose word he can rely ; conversing with holy men and women in garth and cloister ; gazing with shining eyes on some relic or memorial of the saintly lady of his love, thrice happy if his unhallowed lips or hand may touch it. A very Minnesinger at heart, one sees, for all his coarse black frock and knotted girdle ; and a most scrupulous and devoted biographer. " Letters I addressed (hither and thither), searching out in all these matters the truth of the thing, and striving for historic completeness." Writing of Elizabeth in this fashion he was little likely to overlook the youthful Landgrave, her husband Lewis, who " fostered and shared in all her goodness." This young prince one finds to be a memorable and starry piece of manhood ; indeed, so

far as one can discover, the only splendid personage of those days at all worthy of intimate association with such child-like innocence and womanly holiness as Elizabeth's.

So, at the age of sixty, when he had been a friar for upwards of forty years, Dietrich began to write. Arranging, amending, supplementing ; sometimes omitting, but for the most part transcribing the words of his authorities, he put together his book ; revised and re-wrote and yet again re-wrote very many portions of it with his own hand, and with eyesight failing, poor soul ; but nothing he inserted (" I declare before God and His angels elect ") save what was warranted by approved writings and the veracity of devout people.

The theme inspired many another old writer in prose, and at least one in verse ; and the charm of that most innocent soul, almost as childlike in its beauty at the close as it was at the beginning, has not been lost upon our own time. One turns to Dietrich for the

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earliest story, but anything elsewhere found that could attract young eyes from the fall of celestial roses to “Heaven’s dear almoner” herself has been used in these pages.

The Prophecy of Klingsohr

IT was the beginning of the thirteenth century, the high noon of the Age of Faith. Christian people lived as close to the unseen as to the visible world. The mysteries of religion and the occurrence of the miraculous were no more to be questioned than the reality of mountain-rock and forest-tree. Men believed intensely. The fiery blood of half-barbaric races might whirl them into fits of madness, but the flaming sin or the ruthless crime was followed by fasting, prayer, and floods of tears, and expiated perchance by a public scourging at the church door.

At this moment Western Christendom was passing through an immense transformation. The old social order was breaking up under the will of a potentate who wielded the sword of this world and held the keys of

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the next. The Red Cross emancipated the burgher and the serf of the fields, relieved the debtor, released the criminal, absolved the vassal from service to his liege-lord. From the chivalrous dream of delivering the Holy Sepulchre the great nobles of Europe had awakened to the perception that princely estates had been impoverished ; vast tracts of land had changed ownership ; traders, merchants, and money-lenders had amassed huge profits, and the Church had been enormously enriched. Overshadowing this declension of baronial power and the consequent expansion of kingly rule was the growth of the papal supremacy.

Wealth and luxury were perhaps inevitable in a system which claimed political suzerainty over the kingdoms of the earth, but multitudes of devout believers turned in despair from the splendour of worldliness which discredited the Church. St. Bernard in his time had groaned in spirit for " the days of old when the apostles cast their nets for a draught of human souls, not for gold or

silver." Now the protest took the form of numerous heresies ; but the force which lay beneath the discontent, the waywardness, the revolt of the heretics was an ardent if unschooled belief, and a longing for the simple rule which Our Lord taught on the hill-sides of Palestine. The Poor Men of Lyons most truly expressed the general cry of the estranged for reform, and in a little while the return to the footsteps of Christ which they contemplated was accomplished with happier results by the Poor Man of Assisi and his Grey Friars.

So far one may indicate these phases of the great transformations. Others were effected by stirrings and impulses which escape our questioning. The upspringing of a new joy in religion is one of the mysteries of experience. It was as though the windows of heaven had opened and a spirit of uplifting song had breathed over Europe and found utterance in many forms of expression. The master builders felt it, and under their hands the quickened stone took the mighty curve of

seraph wings and soared into the pointed arch, flamed into quivering spires, expanded into aerial galleries crowded with lyric imagery. Love, one might have said, had cast out fear ; men hitherto in this age had propitiated God, now they praised Him.

The spirit of song roused the Trouvères and the Troubadours. Provence broke into the flower of a gay and sensuous literature. Then Germany rang with the hero-epic, and laughed and sparkled with the music of the Minnesingers. Never was such universal piping. Spring-time, with green leaf and blossom and bird, came as an angelic visitor, and the peasant in the furrow took a conscious delight in Nature. But in the dreamy heart of the German minstrel Love was not content with the sweet colours of human beauty ; it took on the guise of an unspeakable mystic longing, and revealed itself at last as the " strong Son of God."

And just as St. Francis realized in practice the teaching of holy poverty which had been anticipated by Waldo, the merchant of Lyons,

so too, long before Elizabeth died, he unconsciously blended and spiritualized all that was purest and most beautiful in the lyric joy of Troubadour and Minnesinger. He also, and his followers, were wandering minstrels—"God's *jongleurs*,"—singing songs of heart-ease and love in the towns and villages, the fields and the olive groves and terrace vineyards of Umbria and the Marches.

Like the Troubadour, he loved the fairest of women—for what else was my Lady Poverty? The Provençal serenade gave a romantic thrill to the summer gloaming; St. Francis smiled at the happy thought which it suggested, and thenceforth at sundown, through all the seasons of the year, the *Ave Maria* floated sweetly over hill and vale from all his chapel bells.

Did the Minnesinger take a new-born delight in woods and waters and flowery meadows, and watch with kindly eyes the blithe play of little wild creatures? St. Francis lifted his feeling for Nature to an

unprecedented level of spiritual sympathy, and with him sympathy was ever linked with practical service. He begged his companions to keep plots of ground for his little sisters the flowers ; to provide honey and wine for the bees when it turned to winter ; to scatter food for the birds, especially for “ my brother Lark.” The tench a fisherman gave him he put back into the lake, bidding it love God. “ Why dost thou torment my little brothers, the lambs,” he asked, “ carrying them bound and hanging from a staff so that they cry lamentably ? ” and gave his cloak to rescue them. The very wolf was his good kinsman, and in his Song of the Sun he gathered into the happy bosom of a world-wide love all created things and Sister Death.

Even the inspiration of the cathedral builders was raised in his life to a higher pitch. Praise and benediction left little place for prayer to kneel. The oppressive sense of sin, the dismay of judgment, the terror of damnation were consumed in the fires of a seraphic love, and the whole soul of

the man flamed up to heaven transfigured, a living temple of God.

Such, in a glimpse, were the aspect and drift of the age.

In the universal welcome which greeted the Minnesingers, Hermann, Landgrave of Thuringia, stood conspicuous among princes for his enthusiasm and munificence. The most brilliant of the new poets frequented his court. There you might have met Wolfram von Eschenbach, builder of the heroic sagas of *Parzival* and *Titurel*, and Walther von der Vogelweide, sweet and prolific laureate of the school of Love. The Wartburg, overtopping the high woods above Eisenach, was invested with the glory of verse; and out of the lyric contests held in its noble *sängersaal* grew the poetic legend of "The Strife of the Minstrels."

The most famous of these contests took place in 1206. There were six competitors, and so keen, it is said, became the struggle and so embittered the rivalry, that the doomsman was summoned to stand by with

his rope, and straightway swing the unsuccessful competitor to the nearest tree. That tragic ending to a revel of madrigals, flower-songs, and eulogies was possible enough in a time when people made little account of torture and mutilation. Had not Henry VI just doomed the Sicilian conspirators against his throne to fiery seats and red-hot crowns ? Friar Dietrich, however, knows nothing of a masked doomsman and a green gallows-bough, and simply records that the contest was stayed before the close, and that Klingsohr, the master of all song-craft, was sent for by the Landgrave to judge between the minstrels.

Thus it came about that on a summer afternoon in the year 1207 a stately company of travellers rode into the little walled grey town of Eisenach and alighted at the goodly inn, with its carved timbering and coloured gables, near the St. George Gate.

Master Klingsohr came from Transylvania, the land of the Seven Castles as that part of Hungary was called ; was the most learned and resourceful of men ; versed in letters and

science from his youth, no less skilled in necromancy and the abstruse lore of the starry heavens. Thereto he was a friend of King Andreas of Hungary, and a person of princely revenue. Legend in after-days converted him into a mighty magician; modern scholars regard him as a myth. Dietrich lived near enough to the time to know something of the truth of the matter.

In the cool of the evening, when the western glow had died from the forest and the storks had nested, princes, courtiers, and the minstrel knights came down from the Wartburg to bid him welcome; and as he sat conversing with them in mine host Heinrich's garden in the balmy summer night, he glanced up at the shining mazes overhead. Something in the aspect of the heavens appeared to arrest his notice. He gazed intently, and silence fell on the group of visitors. One of them at length ventured to break in upon his abstraction: "We pray you of your courtesy to tell us what secret

of things to come you have read in these mysterious stars.”

The Hungarian looked round upon them with a grave smile. “Since you ask,” he said, “be it known to you that a daughter has been born to-night to the King of Hungary. Her name shall be Elizabeth. Holy shall she be. She shall be given in marriage to the son of this prince”—raising his eyes to the dusky heights of the Wartburg—“and all the earth shall rejoice and be exalted in the renown of her sanctity.”

And, indeed, on that summer night, as may readily be believed—in Presburg or in the old town of Sáros-Pátak, for no authentic record of date or of place has been preserved—a little maid was born to Andreas, King of Hungary. One can imagine with what pageant of clergy and Magyar splendour and rejoicing the babe was carried to the font and received the name of Elizabeth; but she was the King’s third child, and the rumour of these incidents could scarcely have travelled on the idle wind across Austria and Bohemia

to the Wartburg. There, beyond question, they were known almost immediately after they had happened, and strangely enough the course of events began to run fair towards the fulfilment of the prediction.

The Strife of the Minstrels had been brought to a happy conclusion, and Master Klingsohr rode away through the forest to the land of the Seven Castles, possibly with the assurance of having accomplished a more delicate mission than the adjudgment of poetic contests. Was the master-singer and star-reader also an astute diplomatist? What political motives could have led Andreas to offer or Hermann to seek a close alliance with Hungary? Dietrich ignores these matters; Klingsohr vanishes into the unknown; but certain it is that within a few months the Princess Elizabeth, still a babe at the breast, was promised to the Landgrave's eldest son.

In the high old castle of Presburg, overlooking sunny expanses of country and the broad waters of the Danube, the little creature grew into a winsome childhood.

Sprightly she was and gay, tender-hearted and compassionate, given to all manner of playful kindnesses and pretty pieties ; but withal, I take it, quite a simple and healthy little mortal, not without flaws of wilfulness and other childish faults. Holiness is a conquest of the will, not an efflorescence of temperament.

Looking back long afterwards, devout people saw those early years through the glamour of her sanctity. They remembered that at her birth a happier time began for Hungary, and it seemed to them that even in her cradle the innocent babe, dropped like a blossom from Paradise, had brought peace and goodwill to the land. If they recalled the memory of her great ancestors, it was but natural, for in the Árpád blood there was a mingled strain of heroism and saintliness, and the most glorious figures in the first hundred years of the history of Hungary as a Christian nation were canonized kings. To this day the embalmed hand of St. Stephen is carried in procession, and the

kings of the Magyars are crowned with his "apostolic" diadem ; and legend still tells how, two and a half centuries after his death, St. Ladislas rose from his tomb at Grosswardein, mounted the horse of his bronze statue, and routed the Tartars.

Of Andreas, Dietrich has little to say. He mentions him as illustrious for his wealth and power, a good and pacific man. Virtuous, pious, blameless in his rule, adds the old German rhymer of the metrical Life ; and proceeds to depict in the colours of romance the discovery of inexhaustible gold mines in the mountains, and the munificence with which Andreas used his marvellous riches in building churches and founding monasteries. In modern writers, however, we find him set before us in all the grace and integrity of an ideal sovereign, a flower of kings, chivalrous, bountiful, saintly, the glory of religion and the delight of his people. In the cold light of history one turns from that delineation disenchanted and regretful.

The father of Andreas, Bela III, died

before he could realize his dream of striking a blow for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. He had amassed considerable treasure for the purpose, but at the opening of the Third Crusade, when Barbarossa marched through Hungary to the East, he could do no more than welcome the Emperor and assist his troops upon the way. On his death-bed Bela surrendered the sceptre to his eldest son, Emeric ; his treasure he entrusted to Andreas, and besought him to employ it on his behalf in delivering the Holy Land. No sooner was the King laid in his grave than Andreas drew together a great host ; but the power and resources which should have been devoted to the service of the Red Cross were used to hurl his brother from the throne.

Emeric was defeated, the provinces were overrun, and Andreas proclaimed himself supreme over a great part of Hungary. In vain did the King appeal to Pope Innocent III to insist on Andreas fulfilling his father's vow. The successful rebel ranged on unchecked in wickedness and contumacy. At length, in

1198, the brothers met in arms on the banks of the Drave, and there occurred one of the strangest episodes recorded in the Magyar chronicles.

The camp of Andreas resounded with the carousal of a great army confident of victory. Emeric sat despondent among his gallant but hopelessly outnumbered adherents. Suddenly he arose in silence and went forth alone, crowned, sceptred, and royally robed. He entered the hostile camp, proceeded to his brother's tent, and broke abruptly on the sight of the revelling chiefs. "Let me see the man," he said, in the hush of amazement which followed his appearance, "who dare lift a sinful hand against his King and lord." Advancing to the high seat, he grasped his brother's hands, led him out through the band of rebels, who seemed turned to stone, and took him prisoner to his own encampment. "Such divinity doth hedge a king!"

For nearly six years Andreas remained in captivity. Then as Emeric felt his own end approaching he had his little son Ladislas

crowned as his successor, released his brother, forgave him his disloyalty, and committed the child to his guardianship. Andreas failed in his trust. The child was stripped of the very semblance of sovereignty, and banished with his mother from the court of his protector. On his death a few months later Andreas assumed the crown of St. Stephen. The year was 1205, and the Golden Age which in after-times the baby Elizabeth was said to have brought with her to earth was this cessation of civil strife, the revival of prosperity with the return of peace, and the dazzling expenditure of a king who delighted in the pageantry of state and lavish benefactions in the cause of religion. Men of that age are not to be judged by our standards, but look at Andreas in what light we may, we cannot think of him as a worthy successor of the crowned saints of his line.

His wife Gertrude was of the illustrious ducal house of Meran and Dalmatia, which traced a direct descent from Charlemagne. Of her brothers, Egbert was Bishop of

Bamberg, and Berthold Patriarch of Aquileia. Her sister Hedwige married Henry, Duke of Silesia, lived and died in sanctity, and was enrolled among the saints. The marriage of her blameless sister Agnes to Philip Augustus of France was the cause of a bitter struggle with the Pope, in the course of which the French kingdom was laid under interdict. Her sister Mathilda became abbess of the great Franconian convent of Kitzingen, and we shall meet with her for a moment in the course of this story.

Gertrude herself appears to have inherited many of the distinguished qualities which had made her house one of the most powerful and illustrious in Europe. To a marked breadth of intellect she added extraordinary courage, decision, and swiftness of action. Her beauty and force of character completely dominated the King; and had she lived, the handsome, dashing, and irresolute Andreas might have found in her the gifts and virtues he needed for a tranquil and prosperous reign. Unhappily a fatal mistake

neutralized her capacity for successful government ; she seems to have made little effort to win the love of the Hungarians. She surrounded herself with her own people, and her favouritism and extravagant patronage led to a disastrous estrangement of the Magyar nobility.

Three years passed quickly and happily for Elizabeth. In those far-off days, and in all the centuries of the world, childhood was the same strange and delightful age of discovery and adventure as it is now. The awakenings to perception, the glad surprises of sight and sound and touch are things that escape record, but they underlie the beginnings of character. In the palace gardens, on the high sunny ramparts, in the long galleries, glimmering with legendary weapons and suits of mail, or appearing almost alive with the pictures and statues of departed heroes, at the windows overlooking the great yard where troops of horse and foot filled the world with the clash and jingle of iron and the splendour of banners and war-gear, each

day must have been thronged with ever-fresh magic and miracle. Then there was the rich Byzantine chapel of the castle, with its deep silence and many-coloured light, in which doubtless there came to her when she was old enough those strange visitings of the unseen that come so often to light-hearted children in their moments of wistfulness ; and there, amid the dim frescoes and fair imagery, she localized and gave form and a meaning of her own, as children will, to what she had heard at her mother's knee of heaven and the angels, and God and holiness.

It was to this time that legend attached the beautiful incident of the divine Child of Nazareth taking part in Elizabeth's simple play.

For earthly playmates she had the children of the court besides her sister Marie and the chivalrous little Bela, who was one day to be a true Árpád king. The grim warrior-chiefs made much of the friendly child, and as to Andreas, she was " the light of his eyes and joy of life." With the Queen and the great ladies

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affectionate intercourse was blended, even in those tender years, with a careful training in the stately graces and grave courtesies of royalty.

As the time drew near when, according to the custom of the age, the Princess was to be confided to the care of the family of her future husband, father and mother must have had many anxious thoughts and moments of sadness. The alliance was one of the most brilliant, the prospect was unclouded, but to part with the winning little being, to entrust her so young and helpless to the charge even of those who could not but love and cherish her, wrung their hearts, and Elizabeth must have often looked up perplexed and half frightened when she found herself snatched and pressed in their arms amid an outbreak of tears. Perhaps, too, the remembrance of another child for whom even a brother's prayers could not secure protection or pity may have stricken Andreas with remorse and misgiving.

In the summer of 1211 an imposing

embassy of great lords and noble ladies, among whom we need remember only the chief, Count Walther von Varila, the Landgrave's Cupbearer, set out from the Wartburg to escort the Princess to her new home. At Presburg they were received right royally, entertained for three days to stately religious services, martial games, dancing, minstrelsy and merry feasts, and on their preparing to return were loaded with magnificent gifts. Clothed in silk embroidered with silver and gold, and reclining in a silver cradle, Elizabeth was committed by her mother to the Thuringian ladies. "Tell your good Prince," she said, "that I pray him be well and of happy cheer, for if the Lord gives me life I shall heap riches upon him."

Besides the royal dowry which was to be taken to the Landgrave, the King gave six superb horses for the child's use, and Queen Gertrude sent with her gold and silver vessels many and wonderful ; most precious diadems, rings, necklaces, and jewelled girdles ; a bath of silver, numberless dresses, and cushions,

pillows, and coverlets of purple silk. Things of such cost and beauty as these which the Queen lavished on her daughter had never before been seen in Thuringen-land. The Thuringian visitors who had come with two carriages left Hungary with a train of thirteen.

Before they started Andreas drew Walther von Varila aside. "Oh, Count," he said, with lips quivering, "in you I trust. Promise me on the faith of a Christian knight that you will ever protect and be a true friend to my little child." And Walther looked gravely and kindly into the King's troubled face: "On the faith of a Christian knight I give you my promise."

In the territories through which they passed the princes, prelates, and nobles, who had entreated them with high honour on their eastward journey, now received them with redoubled kindness and courtesy. They reached Thuringia without misadventure, traversed the ancient forest by the great road which ran below the wooded skirts and the

bare ridge of the Hörsel, and at last saw afar in the evening light the towers of the Wartburg.

As soon as tidings of their approach were brought to the castle, the Landgrave and the Duchess Sophia went down in great joy to Eisenach to welcome them, and as the cavalcade entered the gates of the old grey town both fell on their knees and returned thanks to God for the happy arrival of the child-bride.

They turned aside to the goodly inn, in the garden of which the star-gazer Klingsohr had foretold her coming in the summer night four years ago. Hermann fondly took the child in his arms, kissed her, and called her his little daughter. Under the roof of the *Helgreven* inn and under the light of the same stars, Elizabeth entered upon her new life through the blessed doors of sleep.

The Castle in the Forest

ON the morrow there was a mighty stir of excitement in Eisenach. The principal burghers had been invited to the reception of their future mistress. Lords and ladies rode in with their vassals from the neighbouring estates, and the long ascent through the woods to the Wartburg was gay with festal colours and resounded with merriment. Sweet and grave in her jewelled silks, the little bride was brought in state to her home. The bridegroom, Duke Lewis, a blushing, yellow-haired lad of eleven, bowed low and kissed her hand. The ceremony of betrothal was solemnized in the chapel of the castle ; the two children were laid side by side under one coverlet, and the happy event was celebrated with dances and revels and one of those festivals of music and Minnesongs which were the glory of Thuringia.

One takes pleasure in the fancy that on this day, and often afterwards, Wolfram of the Ash-tree Brook and Walther of the Bird-meadow saw and lost their hearts to this little girl—even put into their verse, perchance, some prettiness or piquancy of hers, as you put a wild flower into the book you are reading.

So, at the age of four years, Elizabeth began life afresh at the Wartburg. Lewis was not her sole companion. There were his brothers, Hermann, Henry, and Conrad; their sister Agnes, who was about her own age; and she had seven other playfellows, little daughters of the nobles of the household. One of these, Jutta or Judith, a year older than Elizabeth, became her lifelong friend, and after her death wrote her recollections of their early years.

In kindly surroundings children live so vividly and so whole-heartedly in the present—such a glamour is there in common things, and such a gladness in merely being alive—

that they have scarcely time to remember anything that has gone by. At dusk, when the simple prayers have been said, with quaint interpolations and additions, and they have become suddenly aware of the complete and awful loneliness that can befall little souls, some cause of sorrow, some sense of loss may assail them ; there is a swift April shower, and then while the drops are still falling, sleep with magical touch hides the woeful little head in her bosom.

So it was with Elizabeth. The past faded softly away, gradually the faces of those she loved best grew dim, new affections gently overgrew the old. If at times she was troubled with heart-ache and longing—and that might well happen when devout Hungarians of rank, returning from Aix-la-Chapelle and the sacred relics which Charlemagne had enshrined there, visited the Wartburg, and she heard in her mother-tongue all the news of home and a hundred loving messages—she was helped by her constant desire to be good, by the discipline of her

early training, and her natural gaiety. How rapidly and how surely these experiences quickened and deepened the innate piety which had already revealed itself in numberless sweet ways and gentle actions, we can scarcely realize.

For all its aspect of savage force, the castle was a pleasant abode in the summer and not without its blustering picturesqueness in the winter. The summit of the huge grey rock on which it towered resembled a giant's footprint, pointing to the south. The road from Eisenach, on the north, ascended, rugged and sinister, through the gloom of great pines and ancient oak and beech. To the left of the entrance the bare rock dropped sheer to the bottom of the mountain. But from the summit one gazed out over the forest glades, scattered thorpes, and cultivated land. The bold ridge of the Hörsel rose on the northeast, its deep caverns resounding with the eerie voices of hidden waters, and the legend of Tannhäuser taking shape in the superstition of the peasants. Further away, south-

ward, were the Plains towards Salzungen, and the sweep of blue hills beyond.

Where the footprint was broadest, the chimneyed apartments of the Landgravine, the palace with its noble halls enriched by Byzantine art, and the beautiful chapel, stood on the morning side ; the garden lay open to the sunset—a garden in the air, high above the singing of the birds ; the centre of the footprint to the south tower was occupied by the spacious palace yard. This was the children's playground.

How distinctly Jutta remembered their childish amusements, and with what cleverness Elizabeth managed to give everything a playful turn to piety. No place was so delightful to her as the chapel ; and long before she could read at all, they often found her lying in front of the altar, with her small hands folded and the Psalms spread open before her, as if she were praying from the big illuminated book. There was a game in which they hopped on one foot, and when they played at that, Elizabeth

would try to chase the other girls towards the chapel, and if she found the carved oak door closed and could not enter she would press her lips to the portal and the dear walls. In certain ring-games that they had she used to ask God to help her to win, and promised so many genuflexions and *Ave Marias* ; and when she could not escape from the others to fulfil her promise alone, she would say, " Let us lie down on the ground and measure who is tallest." So with one girl after another she would kneel and lie her length until she had completed the number of her genuflexions. Sometimes they appear to have played for stakes or prizes, and Elizabeth gave a tenth of all she won to the playmates who were not so well off as she, and would make them other small presents, but they had to promise her to say an *Our Father* or a *Hail Mary*.

At a word seven hundred years roll back like mist from the hill-side, and we are in the sunshine with the bright-eyed children of the old world as they laugh and revel in

their unchanging sports and singing-games—their Riding Dukes, and Rings o' Roses, and Village Raids, Nutting in Maytime, and expeditions to Babylon, where the wicked Soldan keeps the Sacred Places in thrall. Does the little maid's fanciful and joyous piety seem precocious and unreal? Consider these events then, which were the talk of the children everywhere, in city and village, in woodman's cot and miner's cabin.

Pope Innocent's appeal for another crusade had fallen on cold ears among the mighty, but the poor of Christendom had been moved to a deep and widespread excitement by the changes and unrest of the old Syrian wars and by the stories of soldiers and pilgrims; and now this feeling was intensified by the Red Cross processions chanting in the streets, and the impassioned sermons calling for the deliverance of the Holy Land. Groans and prayers rose to heaven against the pagans who "held God prisoner." As for the kings and proud nobles who refused to go to His aid, what would they say before the judgment-seat

when God showed them His wounds and bade them render account of the land in which He had died for them? Wild rumours of awful visions and of warning voices heard in the night flew from mouth to mouth, and produced a state of tense nervous expectation.

Suddenly a small spark fired a great train. In May, 1212, Stephen, a shepherd-lad of Cloyes, a village of Vendôme, gave out that he had seen our blessed Lord Himself in the guise of a pilgrim from Palestine, and had been commissioned by Him to preach a crusade among the children. With wallet and crook he set out to St. Denis, the burial-place of the old French kings, and there he proclaimed his message to the throngs of pilgrims visiting the shrine of the patron-saint of France. This boy of twelve was gifted with marvellous pathos and fervour of speech, and the crowds were thrilled as he told how the hour had come when God needed not the valour of the strong, but the faith of the young. What warriors and armies had failed

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to accomplish should be given into the hands of little children. The great waters should divide before them, and they should cross the sea dry-shod. Where the hosts of the Red Cross had in former times slain the heathen, they should baptize them. Jerusalem should rejoice upon her hills, a city of truth, a golden city full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

Thousands of pilgrims carried the tidings of the new crusade ; the name of Stephen was noised through the land ; excitement spread like flame in dry grass. From all parts of France swarms of children, who would neither be advised nor controlled, hurried through fields and woods, over mountains and rivers, on their way to the Holy Land. The University of Paris condemned the movement ; the King ordered the crusaders, boys and girls, shepherds and the children of nobles, to return to their homes. Fathers and mothers wept and implored them not to go, but in their wild exaltation neither force nor persuasion could withhold them. Men and

women, priests, even feeble old men, joined them in their desperate adventure. Many ascribed their reckless enthusiasm to enchantment and the illusions of a wicked sorcery which aimed at their destruction.

The picturesque old city of Vendôme was fixed as their meeting-place, and thence in the last days of June some thirty thousand of them, wearing the red badge, bearing aloft banners and crosses, singing with triumphant hearts, turned their faces towards Marseilles and the unknown ways through the blue abysses.

Meanwhile either the movement had spread through the German border duchies, or the same strange hallucination had occurred simultaneously in the Rhine provinces.

Watching his flock in the village pastures near Cologne, Klaus, a shepherd-boy of about Stephen's age, beheld a cross of light shining in the heavens, and an angelic voice bade him undertake the same mission. He hastened to the illustrious city where pilgrims of every race and tongue in Christian Europe

were constantly coming and going, for in the stately cathedral of Charlemagne lay enshrined the Three Kings of the East. As the boy made known the divine call, and summoned the children from the towns and villages, he contrasted the splendour of the tomb of these earthly kings with the deserted and dishonoured sepulchre of the Lord of heaven and earth.

The same irresistible impulse swept over the country ; the same hopeless efforts were made to check the gathering of the elated children. There were fewer girls among them ; but the children of rich burgher houses were more numerous, and from the feudal manors and picturesque crag-castles, where the feats and fortunes of crusading ancestors were kept in vivid memory, many more boyish heroes threw in their lot with the rustic host. At the beginning of July an array of twenty thousand, in long grey coats and broad hats, with red cross on breast and pilgrim staff in hand, left Cologne and followed the course of the Rhine southward, under the leadership of Klaus.

Their route lay over Mount Cenis to the sea at Genoa.

Earlier or later, for the record is obscure, another contingent, as numerous and as youthful, set out under an unknown leader, and traversing Suabia were to enter Italy by the St. Gothard Pass.

Think of the wonderment and talk in castle and cottage during these summer months ; of the stories which numberless other children heard—and assuredly Elizabeth listened with breathless eagerness—of the adventures of the pilgrims. Oh, the long marches in the burning sun ; the winds, the rains, the thunderstorms ; the nights spent in market-places, in barns and hovels, on the lee side of the stacks, under the cold trees ; the coarse food, the hungry days, the aching feet, the weary bodies ! Then came rumours of mishaps, sufferings, disorder. The children were wronged, beguiled, plundered by the ruffians and depraved women who follow camps. Robber knights captured and made serfs of them. Some were drowned at the fords,

some fell a prey to wild beasts, numbers sickened and died in the fields and woods. Many gave up in despair and endeavoured to find their way home again.

The contingent under Klaus had lost half its numbers before they crossed the Alps. Still more perished in the cold, in the snow, in the storms among the mountains. At last they reached Genoa. The City Fathers refused to let them remain longer than one night. The children laughed—one night was all they needed; on the morrow the sea would open, and a marvellous way between walls of sapphire and beryl would lead them to Jerusalem. But the sea rolled on in the wind and the sunshine. At Rome in the last week in August a remnant of the twenty thousand received the Pope's blessing. "These children shame us," said Innocent bitterly; "while we are asleep, they march forth joyously to conquer the Holy Land,"—but his Holiness ordered them to go back to their homes until they were old enough to fulfil their vows.

After similar hardships and disasters, the children under the unknown leader arrived at the evil seaport of Brindisi. The Bishop, a wise and fatherly man, prevailed upon many of them to abandon their impossible enterprise. The rest, finding ships in which they were promised a free passage, set sail, and were never heard of more.

At Marseilles, too, the French children gazed helplessly at the illimitable waters, through which no path opened. "For God's sake and without hire," two Marseillaise traders offered to convey them to their destination. It is said that fifty thousand pilgrims embarked. As the fleet of broad-beamed merchantmen trailed out into the Gulf, their clear young voices were heard singing the Crusaders' hymn, "*Veni Creator Spiritus*,"

"Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest."

For twenty years no word reached Europe of what befell them.

One can scarcely suppose that Elizabeth did not hear of these strange and engrossing

incidents. They may afterwards have grown dim in her memory, and yet the emotions they awakened have never faded away. In a child of such lively imagination, of such grave thoughts and natural piety, their effect, one thinks, would be to fix her attention on the Holy Sepulchre and the sufferings and death of Christ, and out of that early bent of her mind may have grown the intense devotion to the Passion of our Saviour which became the supreme characteristic of her spiritual life.

If any one in that stately household could have replaced the feeling of home for the little Princess, it was the Landgrave. Staunch Varila was good and kind, chatted and made merry with her whenever chance offered, but she had found a kinswoman's place in Lord Hermann's affection. He was often absent, for he was a strong man in a restive land, and his keen eye and firm will were needed everywhere; but at each return he had a fond greeting for "his little daughter." In 1197 he had succeeded his

childless brother, Lewis III, who fell at the storming of a fort near Damietta, which was set "in the flood of the Nile, and was only to be come at by towers and platforms reared on the masts of the crusaders' ships." Both were sons of Lewis II, "the Man in Iron."

A glance at this Man in Iron, and you have the days of Elizabeth staged in their turbulence and grim justice. At the outset, say the *Chronicles (Monumenta) of the Landgraves of Thuringen-land*," this Lewis was affable and gentle, so that he was held in contempt by his vassal lords, who harried the rustic folk cruelly." Hunting upon a day, he came at nightfall to a forge in Ruhla Forest, and asked for harbourage. Ay, and who might *he* be? Of the Landgrave's suite, was the cautious answer. "A fig for your Landgrave," blazed out the smith. "Shelter you may take—not for love of your master. Lead your horse to the byre; there is hay. No other bed here."

All that night it seemed to him that he lay awake and listened to the blowing of

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bellows and clang of anvil as the smith, howling a wild chant of plunder and outrage and naming the oppressors, forged a Landgrave of iron to redress the wrongs of the people. He awoke a changed man.

A mighty stiff time he had with his lawless vassals, but he pulled their strongholds promptly about their ears. They leagued against him ; he routed and captured them. " Slay you I will not—that were wilful waste of God's creatures ; I will not put you to ransom, for that is beneath me ; but you shall taste the toil of the peasants you have overridden." He coupled them to a plough, and a menial held the stilts. At each fresh furrow he yoked a fresh team. He cast a ring of boulders about the field—" Quality Acre " ; made a sort of Stonehenge circle of it, a refuge and sanctuary for poor men for ever.

Thenceforth no man would have set the Landgrave's life at a pin's fee, but he knew his danger and went day and night in cunningly wrought mail. " I am dying," he said at last at Naumburg ; " as you love me, swear you

will carry me on your shoulders to my grave at Reinharts-well," the Benedictine Abbey founded by his grandfather, Lewis of the Mighty Leap—from his prison-tower into the rushing Saale. Swear they did, suspecting some ruse, and for two days or more carried his bier to Reinhartsbrunn, prepared to see the crafty man spring up at any moment into terrible life. But he was dead beyond guile or pitfall—died *Anno Domini M.C.LXXII, II Idus Octob.*, according to the tombstone, whereon they laid him in effigy, beardless, his astute head resting on two lions; *ganz eisern in einen kürass*, all iron in his cunningly wrought mail.

Of the same metal, trusty and trenchant, was this Hermann, his son; and, from the gallant boyish look of him, his grandson, too, Lewis, the betrothed of Elizabeth.

The Little Exile

AS to Elizabeth's education at that cultured and brilliant court, we may take almost what we will for granted. Her future position required a liberal and distinguished upbringing, and it is impossible to think of that sparkling and docile spirit as dull, or slow, or unresponsive. The Lady Jutta was not questioned on these points, and she tells us nothing of Elizabeth's schooldays.

What she does speak of, eagerly and lovingly, is the traits, the acts, the abstentions which mark her growth in goodness. When she had "grown up a little," was in her seventh year perhaps, as it was the custom for great ladies to draw by lot a special patron-saint from among the Apostles, Elizabeth set her heart upon St. John the Beloved, and prayed earnestly that he might be granted

as her protector. Now in this matter twelve candles, each inscribed with the name of the companions of the Lord, were laid in confusion upon the altar, and when Elizabeth took one at haphazard she rejoiced when she saw that she had drawn St. John's. Then suddenly a misgiving sprang up in her shrewd little head—was it only a chance? The candles were all mixed up again and replaced on the altar. Once more she drew St. John's. Still she doubted; but when for the third time she read the name of the Beloved Disciple she was overjoyed, and all through her life there was nothing she could refuse—whether granting a favour or forgiving an injury—if it were asked for his sake, but yielded freely and cheerfully more than was asked.

Daily her thoughts turned more and more frequently to God; she uttered His name fondly, invoked Him in all she did, and endeavoured to conform in all ways to His holy will. She took the Magyar inextinguishable delight in dancing, and, as was

wholesome and natural, a lively air could carry her away in buoyant motion ; then suddenly she would stop with a little laugh. " One turn," she would say, " is enough for pleasure ; the rest I will not dance for our Lord's sake." So too with the games she liked best.

She would not wear her sleeves on Sundays until noon, and on festivals she waited until Mass was over before she put on her gloves. These things were the prettiest of girls' gear, not at all easy for a little girl to give up ; the sleeves, doubtless, cut from some of those fairy-coloured silks from Hungary which she brought with her, while the gloves were the rich embroidered *manicas* which betrayed princes, with dainty finger-stalls, one supposes, and perhaps a jewel on the back of the hand. As with other small people, and they need not be princesses, going to bed *was* a trial, and when she was " bundled off " at last, as Dietrich would say (*cogeretur*), she said all the prayers which she had not completed during the day, recited the *Our*

Fathers and *Hail Marias* she had promised, and so fell asleep, mindful of God who giveth songs in the night.

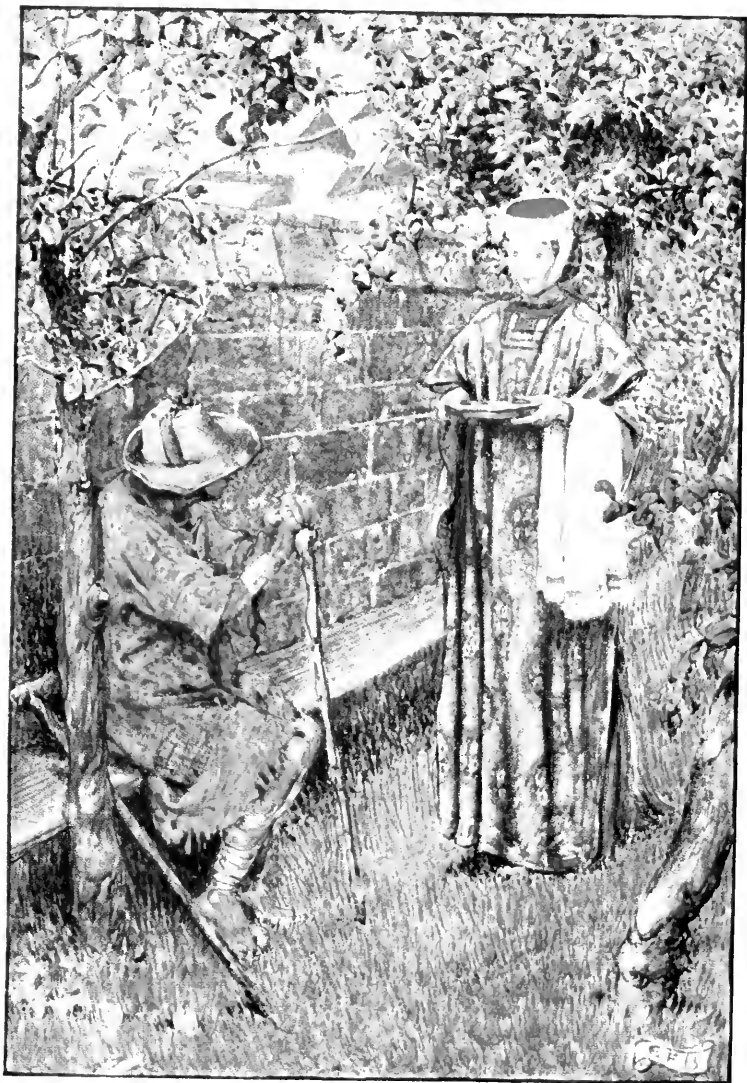
In all these small surrenders and self-denials there was, perhaps, little sense of mortification or austerity, still less of penance and expiation. They were acts of joyous affection, a child's caresses, tokens to God of how dearly she loved Him, sharing with Him all she liked best in the only way in which she could share it.

She was in her seventh year when her first grievous sorrow befell her. News reached Thuringia that her mother was dead, and the manner of her death had been dreadful. The reckless preference which Queen Gertrude had shown all along to her own countrymen, the infatuation with which she placed them in the highest offices and showered wealth and honours upon them, had not only alienated many of the Magyar nobility, but had raised up a faction resolved on the most desperate measures to avenge private grievances and to rid the country of the foreign intruders.

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During the King's absence they surprised the Queen making holiday in the Forest of Pilis, and burst into her tent. Her young son Bela, whom she had caught to her bosom, afforded her a brief respite. "God forbid," cried the leader of the conspirators, "that I should shed the blood of my King!" and dragged the boy from her arms. The next moment the hapless mother was ruthlessly done to death.

Full of wrath and grief, Andreas hurried to the capital to quell the threatened revolt, but long afterwards Bela reproached him bitterly that he had never requited her murderers. Although Elizabeth's remembrance of her mother had grown dim with time and change, the name alone of mother and the suffering and ignominy of her death must have oppressed her with unspeakable pain. They brought home to her, for the first time and in all their vivid personal reality, the anguish and shame of Calvary and the sword of sorrow which pierced the Virgin Mother's heart; and from the days



and nights of that haunting experience one would date the beginnings of her devotion to the Passion of Christ. To that time also one would assign the incidents mentioned by later writers. At the sight of the graves of the departed she would go gently among the grassy mounds and say : “ See how all these are dead. No one knows them any more. Once all they were alive like us, and one day we shall be dead like them ” ; and she would beg her companions to kneel down with her and pray : “ O Lord, by Thy cruel death and by Thy dear mother Mary, deliver these dead from their pain ; and grant us who are alive the grace to come to the joy which does not pass away.”

Ever gentle and affectionate to her, the Landgrave was her human comfort and strength in these days. With his arm about her she confided all her troubles to him, and a look of love in his kind blue eyes, a soft stroking of her hair, a little cheery talk, and a mighty hug set her on her way again docile

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and lighter-hearted. But the strong man was not long to be her great rock.

When she was nine years old some contention with the militant Archbishop of Mainz ended in Thuringia being laid under an interdict. The Landgrave, "all iron" on occasion, like his father before him, took the field; but before many days had passed news reached the Wartburg of his sudden death. They brought him back with draped banners to Eisenach, and buried him in the convent of St. Catherine, which he had built outside the Gallows Gate in consequence of a strange dream.

After that irremediable loss all the world was changed for Elizabeth.

Lewis, her betrothed, succeeded his father as Landgrave, but as he was still in his sixteenth year only, his freedom of action was largely controlled by the wishes of his mother and the influence of his father's counsellors. He was devoted to his bride-elect; her gaiety, her charity, the beautiful and curious observances in which her devotion

found happy egress, drew them very closely to each other. In the early days of their espousals they had called each other "Brother" and "Sister"; that custom still continued, and, indeed, lasted all their lives.

After the death of Hermann, however, the Landgravine Sophia no longer suppressed the dissatisfaction with which she regarded Elizabeth. She must have loved her at the beginning, but as she observed the child's growth in piety she treated her with coldness. From her affection towards her own children she knew how sorely the little exile needed a mother's care and tenderness, but her proud and worldly nature had been piqued, and now that the great-hearted Landgrave was not there to restrain her, coldness turned into an irritable and scornful resentment.

When August brought round the Feast of the Assumption, at which the fruits of the harvest were laid in thanksgiving before the altar, the princely family, crowned and arrayed in splendour, went down in state

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from the Wartburg to the Church of Our Lady in Eisenach. They were ushered to their places, and Elizabeth, kneeling, raised her eyes and beheld in front of her a great crucifix bearing a life-like figure of Our Lord. The spectacle of the Saviour in His agony overwhelmed her. Taking the crown from her head, she cast herself upon the ground, weeping bitterly. The Duchess raised her up roughly, and harshly rebuked her for so far forgetting the proprieties of her station. Did she wish to make herself a laughing-stock, or was she mad that she should crouch and grovel like a crazy nun or some old peasant? "Oh, madam, do not be angry with me," she answered; "I could not kneel crowned with gems and gold before my Redeemer and my King crowned with thorns."

The Landgravine's cruelty was not lost upon her daughter, and Agnes, who was as vain as she was pretty, and as spiteful as she was vain, tried in many ways to tease and sting her companion. Her playmates took

part in the petty persecution; and the wicked example of the Duchess was reflected in the mockery of the courtiers and the insolence of the domestics. No one seemed to remember that Elizabeth was a king's daughter—and a little girl.

Yes, Jutta remembered. At any time in her life, I think, that small lady would have gone for her sake

“Through fire-flaught and the drumlie flood”;

and Walther von Varila remembered, and held his peace for yet a little while.

About this time an occurrence took place which may throw light on what follows. Well-nigh in despair of arousing the crusading spirit among the kings and princes of the West, the Pope foretold, at the Lateran Council in 1215, that the Saracen power had reached the limits of its permitted duration and was about to vanish from the earth. It had lasted 666 years, the number of the Apocalyptic Beast, and he himself would take the Red Cross and hasten its evil end.

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Innocent III died before his design could be accomplished, but under his successor, Honorius, the departure of the expedition was fixed for 1217. Once more Christendom was agitated by signs and portents. Spectral crosses were seen in the sky—one in the north and one in the south, both white in colour ; and between the two a dark cross bore a dolorous figure, with head bent down and nails driven through the feet and hands. Notwithstanding vows and presages Andreas of Hungary alone set out for Palestine, with Leopold of Austria and Lewis of Bavaria serving under his command.

With what gladness—with what pride, if ever proud thought lodged in that lowly soul—Elizabeth heard of his glorious enterprise ; how her prayers followed him for his safety, for his success, for the deliverance of that blessed earth hallowed by the living presence and the precious blood of Christ. If any thought of her father's death crossed her mind, surely she answered it in the spirit of that heroic man-at-arms : “ Comrade, you are

wounded"—“ I am slain, but I will rise again.”

There is ground to surmise that this event was regarded with very different thoughts and calculations by the Duchess and her counsellors. Andreas had sailed to heathendom ; he might never return. Even if he should survive, he might find himself a crownless wanderer. His tenure of Hungary had long appeared precarious, and his reign had been an incessant struggle to curb his stormy nobility. In either case it now behoved them as prudent and responsible men to take some thought as to the future of their young Landgrave. The boldest and most unscrupulous of these ministers bluntly advised the Landgravine to repudiate the marriage contract. The espousals of Elizabeth had scarcely been celebrated with the binding solemnity required by the rank of such a son-in-law and the deference due to his family ! Let the maiden be sent home to her father. Among neighbouring princes could be found a bride who would bring with her

a more magnificent dowry, and from alliance with whose house more powerful and more immediate succour would be secured in any emergency.

The Duchess said neither yea nor nay. More subtle than her counsellors, she perceived that Elizabeth's voluntary retirement to the tranquillity and the congenial pieties of a religious life offered a more seemly and less dangerous solution than the dishonourable rupture which they proposed. With the will to do it and the wicked mother-wit, a little girl's days could be made so troubled and thorny that the peaceful cloister-garth might soon seem the only happy place in the world.

So the heartless persecution was redoubled. The boy-prince Hermann had died shortly after his father. From the other brothers—Heinrich, selfish and faithless; Conrad, a rough and passionate lad—she received neither gentle looks nor kind words. The young Landgrave's gay and light-tongued companions attempted to estrange him from

his betrothed, but as he heard their talk, a look which came into his eyes—blue like his father's and capable of a cold glimmer of the iron quality of the man—warned them that they had ventured to the edge of safety.

The duties of his high office frequently called Lewis away from home, but he never returned from these journeys without bringing his "dear sister" some pretty token of his remembrance of her. During one of these absences Agnes, to whom Elizabeth's sweet and forgiving patience had become intolerable, assailed her in every way in which she thought she could wound her. "I admire your friends, Elizabeth," she said. "You do get them common enough. Any one may see that you were never born to be a lady of high rank. And, of course," she added reflectively, "you never will be—at least in Thuringia. For you are much mistaken if you think my lord, brother Lewis, will ever marry you, unless, indeed, you change wonderfully. But perhaps it will not matter

what class of friends you make if you go home to Hungary."

Elizabeth looked at her with gentle surprise and made no reply ; but when Lewis returned, and she learned that by some mischance or momentary forgetfulness he had not brought her his usual gift, she was deeply distressed. Walther von Varila came upon her, gazing far away with brimming eyes into the unknown world beyond the forest. " Oh, Count Walther," she said as he approached, " you can tell me ; am I to be sent away ? Will my lord and brother forsake me ? " " Never believe it, dear child and Princess," replied Varila, kissing her hand. " If you have heard anything, it is but the malice of graceless tongues. Do not be troubled. Trust me, all will be well. But this wrong and shame has lasted too long already. To-morrow I hunt with his Highness, and I will speak."

On the morrow, then, as the trusty old Cup-bearer rode at the Landgrave's side, " May it please you, my lord," he asked, " that I

should say what I would ; and will you disclose what I seek to know ? ”

“ Speak freely,” replied Prince Lewis, with a smile, “ and I will answer whatever I fitly may.”

“ Then, for God’s sake, what course is it your will to take with the King’s daughter ? Is she to be your wife, or will you send her back to her father ? ”

“ By God’s truth, Count Walther,” replied the Landgrave, and he pointed to the rocky heights of the Inselberg lifting over the green glades, “ if that mountain were turned from root to summit all pure gold, I would more readily reject that as valueless than I would forego my marriage with Elizabeth. Let others think what they will and babble like fools. I love Elizabeth, and nothing shall stand with me before our marriage.”

“ Dear my lord, may I tell her so ? ”

“ Ay, tell her,” said Lewis ; “ and give her this as my pledge ! ”

From the purse hanging at his belt he gave Walther a small mirror enclosed in a bronze

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case. The crystal on one side was plain, on the other it bore the image of the Lord crucified.

When Walther presented it and Elizabeth took it carefully from his hand, says Friar Dietrich, she showed the gladness it gave her by a most joyful laugh.

The Child-Bride

THE incident in the forest fully aroused the Man in Iron, though he did not discard his jewelled gloves and stately mantle. The crafty counsellors, blustering nobles, obsequious courtiers—even the Duchess Sophia herself—became sharply aware of the stark decisiveness which had suddenly developed under the courtesy and sunny graciousness of the Landgrave.

There was an abrupt end to the talk of repudiated contracts, of advantages to be gained from this or that alliance, of the loveliness—and almost as essential as loveliness—the courtly breeding of other ladies. The brusque disrespect, the studied unkindness, the contemptuous familiarity ceased, and the covert insolence of menials was turned to a shamefaced servility. The change

startled Elizabeth. She was brought nearer to tears by the cessation of these insults than she had ever been by the endurance of them. How little any one had loved her for herself all this time! And now, at a word or a look from the Landgrave!—

Oh, the goodness of her dear lord and brother to love her; and oh, the sweetness to be so loved by him! She gazed with unutterable bliss and contentment as the setting sun, reddening the pine-tops, struck upon the porphyry peaks and flushed them with gold. “O dear Lord Christ, if these were turned from roots to summit all into pure gold, he would count them as nothing worth for the love of me!” Then her eyes would grow dim with emotion as she kissed the bronze mirror, opened it, and gazed longingly at the image on the cross. That supreme Presence mingled in all her pain and in all her delight.

On a memorable summer night in 1218— it was the eve of St. Killian, who had left his beloved Erin near six centuries before to

labour in these regions—the Landgrave knelt in vigil before his arms in preparation for his knighthood, and on the following day Engelhard, the Bishop of Naumburg, consecrated his sword to all chivalrous service. Lewis had entered upon man's estate, and was thenceforth his own master—or, more truly, his own man. The interdict still lay, or had been laid afresh, on Thuringia—an abuse of ghostly power not to be borne longer. Dashing across the border into Hesse the Landgrave darted hither and thither with such iron flashes that his Grace of Mainz was brought to a more temperate mind, and a year later their differences were composed.

But the happiest of all days befell in 1221. No one has noted the date or the season, but let us say April; after the stork had returned, and swallow and violet, and the children had carried Winter-Death—a mere man of straw now his reign was done—and burnt him or drowned him in the Nesse. The Wartburg was crowded with guests,

illustrious folk from Hesse and all parts of Thuringia ; and not least distinguished among them, Magyar envoys loaded with bridal presents. Many noble dames and damosels, and knights and squires were lodged in Eisenach—at the sign of the *Helgreven* and elsewhere, and the grey town looked vastly fine in its wedding bravery.

Attended by a train of girlish bridesmaids, Elizabeth was escorted to church, and given into the hands of her husband by the steadfast Varila and Count Meinhard of Mühlberg, who had received her from her father, a little child in her silver cradle, nearly ten years before.

The old writers, who are silent on so many things which interest us, were struck by the beauty of the two. She was lovely in form and of queenly bearing, with clear brown complexion (though the brown was perhaps rather the olive tint of South-Eastern Europe), black hair, and winsome dark eyes. He was of medium height, upright in carriage, with fair ruddy cheeks and long yellow hair. His

voice was soft, his laughter bright and clear ; and he was modest withal, and blushful as a maid. And she was fourteen, and he one-and-twenty.

For three days Eisenach was in a whirl of merry excitement, what with jousts, dancing, and mighty feasts. Then down the forest glades flitted the pride of life ; and the world passed away, and the lust thereof.

For six years the life of Elizabeth was an idyll of entralling fondness, of mystic ardour, of almost childish happiness, the like of which I do not remember in all I have read of romance or of human experience. It was an existence for which enchantment is too mundane a word and rapture too little mundane. Commingling with these youthful lovers, uniting them to each other and drawing them into divine communion with Himself, was the thorn-crowned figure of Calvary. Much in their daily intercourse, recorded with the frank monkish homage of

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another age, seems to-day too spiritual and intimate to be touched in words.

Oh, the good days of the first whole-hearted, unbounded companionship!

“There is no joy so sweet
As musing upon one we love,
And sitting at his feet.”

She would be near him constantly. In his excursions and journeys through his territories—it was all one whether the woods were green or the roads bitter with frost and snow, or the floods were out—she rode by his side, and

“ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine.”

To the annoyance of high officialdom she abandoned the Landgravine's immemorial place at table to sit next to him at meals. When it happened for some reason that she could not accompany him abroad, she went “into mourning,” as we should say, for was she not a widow when he was no longer there? And yet it was a very light-hearted, girlishly innocent, and beautiful widow who awaited

his home-coming. At the news of his returning she clapped her hands and put on her gayest Hungarian silks, brilliant wimple, tight-pleated sleeves, jewelled necklet and what not to welcome him. "This I do not do for pride of heart," she told the Lady Isentrude; "I wish to be comely in my dress for God purely, for I would not give my husband any occasion of sin by having anything in me to displease him."

Isentrude, the widow of some lord of Hørselgau, became lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth after her marriage, and lived with her for several years in such nearness to her person that she seemed to share the Landgravine's most secret thoughts. "My lady," she says, "rose at nights to pray, and the Landgrave would beseech her to spare herself and come to her rest, and all the while he would hold her hand in his, concerned lest she should take some harm. Also she would bid her maidens awaken her gently while he slept; and at times when they thought him slumbering, he was but pretending. Her

prayers too were so prolonged and she so tired that her eyes would close and she would sink down into a deep sleep by the bedside."

Under the splendour of her queenly garments she constantly wore

"A robe of sackcloth next the smooth white skin."

Like Charlemagne, she walked with bare feet, and clad in rough serge, in the processions on the Rogation Days, when men humbled themselves before God and supplicated His blessing on the fruits of the earth. She submitted to the "discipline" every Friday, and every day during the solemn season of Lent. In commemoration of the "new commandment," she clothed herself in mean raiment on Maundy Thursday and washed the feet of twelve poor people, not shrinking from either the maimed or the leprous, and gave them each bread, clothing, and a piece of silver.

In all this "asceticism," to use the word for its brevity, she lived in such happiness and sparkling gaiety that she could scarcely

understand the severity and dismal looks of good people at their devotions. “Do not pray so grimly,” she once said; “you will frighten God!”

The secret of St. Francis was the secret of St. Elizabeth. Like his, her life was sustained by a double joy—the joy of love and the joy of suffering for love. “Are you in grievous pain that you weep so?” St. Francis was asked, when he was once found sobbing bitterly. “Ah me!” he answered, “it is for the Passion of my Lord Jesus that I weep; and for that I would think no shame to go weeping through the world.” And on the mountain of Vernia, when he prayed in the dawn of Holy Cross Day, it was not for any blessing on earth, or even for a place in heaven, but for two graces before he died—to feel in his body, so far as mortal flesh might bear it, the torture which Our Lord suffered in His Passion, and to feel in his heart the exceeding love for which He was willing to bear such anguish.

The fervour of that mystic longing for pain

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found perhaps its clearest expression in the lyric cry which Bonaventura uttered and Jacopone echoed in his *Stabat Mater* :

“*Crucifixe, fac me fortem
Ut libenter tuam mortem
Plangam donec vixero.
Tecum volo vulnerari,
Te libenter amplexari
In cruce desidero.*”

As though to emphasize the characteristics which marked the difference between her austerities and the remorseful or propitiatory penances and mortifications of the age, the incident of the vision of the Crucifix, which had overwhelmed her in her childhood, was repeated with more vivid intensity when she was a wife.

It was at some church in the valleys, at which she was present in state. As she entered she beheld above the altar the image of the Lord crucified; piteous in its nakedness, crowned with plaited thorns, transfixed with nails. Saying within herself, “Lo, this is my God hanging bare; and thou, a mortal of no

worth, art clothed in costly apparel. His head is pierced with thorns; thine is encircled with gold," she fell into a dead swoon, and was borne unconscious into the open air. She did not pray that she might bear in her body the prints of His agony, but thenceforth, save when the duties of her state required otherwise, she wore no more coloured robes, embroidered veils, silk fillets to wreath in the hair, gem-studded combs, tight sleeves, and long trains rustling.

These fervid mystical experiences were accompanied by a practical compassion for all who were poor and suffering, and an inexhaustible charity. Descending from the Wartburg to Eisenach and the surrounding thorpes, she came as closely as she could to the life of the common people.

Open a tome of the old rhymes and chronicles, and you will catch such glimpses as these of the everyday doings. In the early dawn the courtyards are astir with noise and flutter of poultry, swans, and cranes. The herd comes out and blows his horn, and from

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this street and that the cattle issue from sheds and stalls, follow him and his dog and go out, a great drove, through the town gates into the forest, making a wonderful morning music with their bells. At sundown they return. Out in the villages, one passes flocks of two or three hundred geese with a small barefoot lass or lad keeping watch. Here in a cage under the eaves is a starling which has been taught the *Our Father*. When the harvest is done in mid-September the white geese are turned into the stubble of the village land, and feed with the red oxen which answer to the names of the ancient gods. Strange old-world beliefs linger in these rustic spots, and are curiously blended with the later faith. At every shooting-star the people pray for the poor soul which is passing at that moment.

Something of this Elizabeth saw as she went on her mission of pity, nursing the sick, dressing the maladies of the diseased, seeing that the aged had food and fire, nestling new-born babes in her bosom, clothing them, and often holding them at the font.

On a wintry day, as she went forth with one of her maidens down the rugged track called the Knee-smasher, her apron or her cloak filled with provisions, she suddenly came upon her husband returning home from the chase. He came smiling to her with outstretched hands. "You dear sister, why do you burden yourself like this? Let me see what we have here." Elizabeth blushed, hesitated a moment, then opened her garment, and lo! a shower of red and white roses was scattered over the ground.

Upon that spot, it is said, the Landgrave raised a pillar of stone, and one of those roses he preserved until his death.

What does it matter whether this was a miracle, or an illusion, or one of the "day-dreams of the poor" of the Ages of Faith? The essential truth remains the same, yesterday and to-day, that human compassion is the most divinely beautiful thing in the world. The thirteenth century is overgrown, like a wild-rose thicket in June, with these flower-legends, in which the common people

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expressed in their naïve poetic way their belief in the beauty of holiness and in the interpositions of God's love in the crises of man's need.

Only nine years before this time, when Francis and Clare parted because of the evil thoughts of base minds, and she went down the barren ridge of Monte Subasio, and he turned his face to Portiuncula, she ran back to him through the snow. "Oh, Brother Francis, you did not say for how long we shall be separated; tell me when we shall meet again." "When roses bloom on Subasio," replied the "poor man of Assisi"; and thinking to herself, "That is never," Clare turned away; but even as she departed with slow steps, say the kindly shepherd folk, the snow melted from the rocks, the bushes exhaled a mist of green and broke into roses. Clare filled a fold of her mantle with them, and once more ran back, calling Francis by his name. At the sight of these roses brother kissed sister, and they heeded no longer the calumnies of wicked men.



A shower of red and white roses fell around her, and she gazed at them with a look of surprise.

Scarce seven years after Elizabeth's death, a little fellow was hurrying through the castle grounds when his father, the Lord of Aquino, stopped him and asked to see what he was hiding with so much care. The boy showed what he had ; but instead of the food which he had been taking to the poor, there were great clusters of roses. In God's good time this little fellow's name was noised about the world, and to this day is held in high honour—Thomas Aquinas.

Some twenty years later still, Tannhäuser the Minnesinger knelt at the feet of Pope Urban and confessed that for seven years he had dwelt within the Hörsel with the pagan Goddess of Love in her garden of delights ; and the Vicar of Christ, aghast at the immensity of his sin, thrust him forth unshriven : “ Depart, thou doomed soul ; for sooner mayest thou hope that this staff shall grow green and flower again than that God will pardon thee ! ” And the Minnesinger went forth weeping, “ This is the end of all my feats of arms and sweet singing,

to go back to my lady, sorrowful and damned." Then upon a day it came to pass that the Pope, when he would take his staff, saw how it had burst into flowers, red and white, and all its knots had burgeoned into leaf; and in great dread and moved for the knight who had departed in despair, a miserable man and lost, he sent many messengers to seek him; but Tannhäuser was seen no more.

Among the miseries of the age was the ghastly disease of leprosy, which spread rapidly in the West during the coming and going of the Crusaders. The lamentable sufferers—wasted shapes in grey coarse gowns, with hooded faces and Lazarus-clappers, who wandered till they could go no further—were dreaded and loathed with a horror which made men inhuman. But Elizabeth, remembering that Christ had sat at meat in the house of a leper, and that He had bidden His disciples to heal the sick and cleanse the lepers, devoted herself to the most menial service of these poor creatures.

Now, says the old Rhymer, it happened while the court was at Neuenburg (Naumburg) that one day the Duchess Sophia met the Landgrave as he alighted, and taking his hand, "Come with me, dear son," she said bitterly, "and you shall see one of the wonders which your Elizabeth works and I cannot prevent." She led the way to the princely couch; "Outcasts are laid in your bed, and that troubles me, lest you should be smitten with infection. Look for yourself, dear son."

Lewis plucked the coverlet from the bed; the eyes of mother and son were divinely opened, and they beheld the form of Jesus of Nazareth fading away in a mysterious light. Deeply moved, the Landgrave granted Elizabeth her request that a lazar-home should be built half-way up the steep of the Wartburg to receive the wretched wanderers who could not climb as far as the castle for relief.

Shall we stand irresolute before this new miracle? All the life of these two was miracle

at this time. "Miracle is love's world, his home, his birthplace." When the miraculous has ceased, love has vanished. They lived to the end in a romance which scarcely seems possible to us even in the innocent years of childhood.

One night, as they lay awake, Elizabeth told her husband how she had thought of a way in which they might live and serve God better. "We should have to be quite poor; and I would wish that we should have just land enough for one plough, and that would keep us; and about two hundred sheep. Then you could till the ground and look after the horses, doing so much for God's sake. And I should take care of the sheep and shear them." "Oh, you dear sister," said the Landgrave, laughing, "if we had so much land, and all those sheep, we should hardly be poor; and there are people enough who would say we were far too rich."

Another time, in a playful mood among her maidens in the palace, she dressed herself in a worthless cloak such as a serf might wear,

covered her beautiful black hair with a wretched rag, and pretended to be a poor woman begging her bread; then with a curious laugh, suddenly checked as if it were by a lightning-flash into the days to come, "I shall go in this way," she said, "when God shall give me misery to endure for His sake."

In the Golden Days

IT was in this bridal year, some time between the late summer and the reddening of the leaf that, at the desire of King Andreas, a company of Hungarian magnates and nobles rode homeward by way of Eisenach from the saintly shrines at Aix-la-Chapelle. Doubtless he wished to see through their eyes how it fared with his daughter, in what worship she was held, the manner of prince the Landgrave might be, and the condition of his country. Letters, too, they brought from the King, and a warm invitation to Lewis and his bride to visit him.

Most honourable was the greeting given these strangers, who came well-nigh as kinsmen; but while the Landgrave made them welcome in the proud halls looking out on the fair Thuringian-land, he was greatly

perplexed as to how Elizabeth should appear among them, and thought with dismay of the stately dresses she had discarded. And, indeed, just in such luckless case she was as he had feared. This garment had been cut up and given away, this stripped of its gold and silver purfling, this sold for the poor ; even her bridal dress was being so altered that she could not wear it.

“ Oh, sister, I am ill at ease that you should lack what is seemly for our King’s nobles, and there is no time to provide you with beautiful things. My blame it is, but that mends nothing.” “ Let us take this lightly, dearest brother,” said Elizabeth ; “ I have never gloried in what I wore. But I will speak of this with God, and so it may happen that they will never notice my dress.”

The Landgrave went back to his guests, anxious as to what they would think when they saw how humbly clad she went ; but Elizabeth knelt down, and prayed to God to clothe her with such winsomeness and goodwill that she might not grieve her

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father's men or bring dishonour upon her husband. Then she clothed herself as seemly as she might, leaving all shortcoming to God.

When she was ushered into the great hall both the Landgrave and the Hungarians gazed at her with delight ; for, as the old monk writes,

“ Coloured sweet she was, iwis,
As the morning rosy is ” ;

and all men saw that her robes were of silk, hyacinthine, shimmering with a dew of pearls.

“ Queen of Frank-land doth not go,
In her pomp, apparelled so.”

Great then was the pleasure of their meeting ; the invitation was accepted ; and the Hungarians, thinking time heavy till they were home again, rode away, singing the praises of this princess and her happy estate. But when the Landgrave would have her tell him how she appeared so wonderfully clothed, she smiled and shook her head gently.

“When it pleases God,” she said, “He knows the way to do such things.”

In the following spring they paid their visit to Hungary. They were received at Presburg with the gorgeous display in which King Andreas delighted. The time was spent in a brilliant succession of feasts, tourneys, and hunting parties; but most precious to Elizabeth were the quiet hours when, with the trusty old Sire von Varila by her side, she lingered among the scenes of her childhood. Many a shadowy recollection grew vivid; many places and things which she did not recognize showed how much had vanished from her life. Those who knew her when she was a merry little maid were rejoiced to see her again; but what a sense of change there was everywhere!

Her father had married again. Her stepmother was Yolande, daughter of Peter de Courtenay and niece of the Byzantine Emperor, Henry I, and Yolande had two little sons of her own, Elizabeth's half-brothers. Strangely enough by this marriage Elizabeth

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came within an ace of being an emperor's daughter, for on Henry's death the throne of the Eastern Latin Empire had been offered to Andreas. Happily for his irresolute, gay, adventurous, ineffective self, he refused it. Her brother Coloman was King in Galicia, making head against the Tartar hordes. Bela, already crowned as his father's successor, had grown into a gallant young manhood, a true flower of the heroic Árpád stock. It was well perhaps for her peace that she did not know that Bela had championed the rights of the oppressed gentry against the weakness of the King and the violence of the oligarchy; that "the Golden Bull," the *Magna Charta* of the Magyar people, had been wrung from Andreas at the point of the sword, and that father and son had for a critical moment confronted each other in arms. The reticence of bygone things had grown over these tragic matters, as the grass had grown over her mother's grave. No talk of them clouded the sunshine of this holiday season.

At parting Andreas in his impulsive generosity gave with both hands, and the Landgrave and his retinue, even to the grooms and menials, returned to Thuringia with the price of a king's ransom. It was the last time Andreas saw his daughter.

In this year the Landgrave's sister, Agnes, was married to the Duke of Austria, and the Wartburg lost no brightness. The winter came, and the forest rang with points of venery, for Lewis was a mighty hunter. The snow fell, and frost brought the wolf to the poor man's door, and Elizabeth went forth on her works of mercy. Then at length, at the time when the stork comes flying northward, bringing little babes from Paradise, she removed for quiet and repose to the Castle of Kreuzburg. It stood upon a fair hill above the winding Werra, some leagues south-west towards Marburg ; and its ancient church, and the still more ancient stone cross from which it took its name, recalled the far-off days of our own Saxon Winfrid or Boniface. All this woody heathendom he

overran, blessing the wells folk worshipped, cheerfully demolishing demon-groves and unholy images, felling the huge-boughed immemorial oaks of Thor and Odin, and building them into churches and oratories.

All this country, indeed, seems to me English ground, though Killian from the Green Isle in the Water had been over much of it a hundred years earlier; and it is pleasant to link the life of Elizabeth, now in her sixteenth year, with the bright-faced Crediton lad who came to be so near her in place if not in time. At the Field of Oaks (Eichsfeld), some score miles north of Eisenach, the boors stood out angrily for their colossal idol of Fortune and her Wheel; but as Winfrid turned sadly away, he thrust his staff into the ground; it took root, as a stout sapling will do, and threw out leaf and branch; and in no great time there sprang up beside it the church and monastery of Heiligenstadt. At Fulda, Amöneburg, Altenberg, Fritzlar, Kitzingen, Erfürt, and at many another *berg* and *burg*, traces of his work still survive.



A noble, genial, saintly figure of the shadowy Saxon days of Bede ; beautifully human to remember as the friend and counsellor of nuns and abbesses who loved him with the blameless fondness of sisters or daughters ; with whom he was in constant correspondence ; who transcribed the Scriptures in large clear penmanship, " for the sake of my old eyes " ; sent him their Latin poems to correct, their exquisite needlework for his altars, and gifts of money ; and assured him that though he was far away in the body they " would always cling round his neck with sisterly arms."

Several of them he sent for to assist him in his vast task of educating Germany. Theckla, who had been a nun at Wimborne, ruled the great monasteries of Kitzingen and Ochsenfurt (an Oxford older than our own) ; Walburgis (afterwards so curiously associated in her sanctity with Walpurgis Night and the ancient worship of the Earth Mother) was Abbess at Waldheim ; her sister, Leofgitha or Leobgitha, Abbess of Bischofsheim,

near Mainz. "Leobgitha" became "Lioba" and "Liebe" for short—our "lief," "dear." Her face "was like an angel's," and she was cheerful, tender-hearted, and singularly judicious in the matter of eating, drinking, and sleeping. "Take away sleep," she used to say, "and you take away sense"; but her own drinking-cup was so small that the sisters called it *Dilectæ parvus*, "Dear's little one."

Ah, had only Winfrid and these ladies been alive in Thuringia in Elizabeth's days!

The Landgravine was at Kreuzburg then in these days of the new spring, and on the 28th of March her little son was born. The Landgrave was busy with State affairs at Marburg, but as soon as the tidings reached him he hastened to his beloved Elizabeth. As a joyful thank-offering to God, Lewis removed the old timber bridge over the Werra and replaced it by one of stone; and against the face of the rock near the head of the bridge Elizabeth built a little Chapel of the Cross. It linked the old cross of Winfrid with the cross of the Crusader, and both with

that vision of the Passion which she bore in her heart. At his baptism the child received the name of his grandfather, Hermann, the last chief of the house.

To draw such details as these together, it may be added that in the following year a daughter was born, at the Wartburg, and was named after the Duchess Sophia, who had never been too kind to Elizabeth. Lewis was gladdened by the coming of a second daughter in 1225 ; and she too was christened Sophia, in memory of the Landgrave Hermann's first wife, who died in 1195, within a year of their marriage, and left him twin girls, Jutta and Sophia. These kinswomen do not seem to have entered into Elizabeth's life at all. They were seventeen years old when she was brought to Eisenach, and may have already had homes of their own—Jutta as Marchioness of Misnia and Sophia as Countess of Alsatia.

Great feasts and rejoicings were held on these occasions, but when they were over, Elizabeth, barefoot and clothed in coarse

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woollen, would steal out alone from the castle with her babe in her arms, and descending the hard and stony way to a distant church, lay the child upon the altar, and light a taper—a little tongue of burning prayer. Then upon her return the woollen dress and cloak were given to relieve the need of some poor woman.

Master Conrad of Marburg

ENOUGH has been said of that new and joyous mysticism which brought St. Francis and St. Elizabeth, unknown to each other, into such close spiritual affinity. At this point, however, as the idyllic aspect of her future begins to change, one is conscious of a certain pathetic suggestiveness in placing the outline of her life side by side with that of his.

In the year of her birth, 1207, Francis rose new-born from his bed of fever at Spoleto. During her prettily pious childhood at Presburg he was rebuilding the ruined chapels of St. Damian and the Portiuncula, and gathering the first disciples of Lady Poverty. In the twilight of her first Palm Sunday at Eisenach, Clare, the knight's daughter, fled from Assisi to St. Mary of the Angels, and

received from his hand the grey habit and cord of the Minor Brethren. During her girlish growth in devotion he was preaching the "perfect joy," awakening sympathy for all God's creatures, teaching devout men and women that as pure a flower of holiness might be grown in their homes as in the shades of the cloister. While she was living in the intense vision of the Passion of Christ, the Grey Friars were abroad in every land, and Francis was striving against formalism and the loss of the freedom and primitive simplicity of his ideal. In 1223 the official Rule of the Brothers Minor was published. It was not the Rule which he had prepared for his vast household. His beloved poverty had been transformed into mendicancy; an ascetic routine had been put in the place of the movements of spontaneous piety, and he saw the imitation of the life of Christ on earth supplanted by obedience to the Church.

The Franciscans, and especially the Third Order—the men and women who had embraced a religious life amid the duties and

responsibilities of the world—achieved an amazing advance in the civilization of Europe, but an ever-widening difference separated them from the ideal of their founder. He himself walked to the end in the light of his divine dream. How far the experience of Elizabeth reflected his own the story of the coming years will show.

In 1221, the year of her marriage, the first of the Grey Friars appeared in Thuringia. They received a most friendly welcome at Eisenach ; Brother Rodinger or Rodeger, one of the first of the Germans to enter the Order, became the Landgravine's confessor. She built a house for the brotherhood, and the spinning of wool for their clothing was one of the tasks which she added to her numerous works of charity. From this zealous and simple priest she heard the strange and beautiful story of the *poverello* of Assisi, of his life among the common people in imitation of his divine Master, of the Minnesinger strain in his delight in the wild brothers and sisters in feather and fur,

of his songs and sermons, of his rule for those to whom God had appointed a mundane place and calling wherein, if they would, they might serve Him with perfect holiness. And as the secrets of that innocent soul were revealed to the good friar, he must have marvelled that, unconsciously, this princess came closer to the pure and joyous spirit of St. Francis than any of his followers.

Under her confessor's prudent guidance she went radiantly upon her accustomed way of prayer, compassion, and unwearied beneficence. Motherhood had given her a subtle perception of the burdens of pain, anxiety, and sorrow which she might lighten. Children she had always loved; her own babes taught her to love them now with a sweet and patient wisdom. One result of her new experience was the founding of a hospital for sick children and orphans; and these she cherished with such personal affection that whenever she appeared, small hands were stretched out to her from the cots, and a dozen little creatures came running about her with their joyous

“Mother, mother !” *Quemadmodum pulli*—“after the manner of chickens,” Friar Dietrich thought.

If ever one has a right to expect the miraculous it must be from the angels of children ; so quite in the nature of things, when once Elizabeth came up from Eisenach with her cloak full of playthings—glass rings, clay cups in miniature, and various mediæval equivalents of dolls’ tea-sets and the like—and the horse stumbled and fell with Elizabeth and all her chattels over the rocks, a score of angelic wings must have rushed in beneath them, for horse and mistress escaped unhurt and not a thing was broken.

Twice or thrice a day, too, she visited her leper hospital to treat the worst cases ; found time to attend to the old and bed-ridden in their poor huts ; and not unfrequently, when one of her forlorn dependents passed away, prepared the dead for burial. Besides all this she was busied with her cares and duties as princess and châtelaine, and

among the great ladies she received there were few upon whom she did not prevail, says Isentrude, to give up "at least one little thing" for God's sake out of their luxuries—dancing or laced sleeves or a silk belt or some pretty vanity for the hair. They would not have thought it a great sacrifice had they known that her own simple dress—so very homely for the mistress of Thuringia—covered a garment of sackcloth and the cruel traces of the discipline.

Meanwhile her husband was doing sovereign's work in a world which proved unmanageable enough to weak hands and flaccid wills. Ripening manhood had given his form a more soldierly vigour; cares of State had set a stamp of clearer resoluteness on his handsome face, but the frank blue eyes, ready smile, and long yellow hair remained unchanged. Dietrich pictures him as he was remembered by the old people long afterwards. He showed a shy and boyish reverence to all women. His men-at-arms worshipped him for his generosity and

camaraderie. With all men his "yes" was yes and his "no" no, and his mere word as good as another's oath. Under his keen-eyed justice and upright judgments the people lived in peace and security. To end all, he feared and loved God. "An uplifted land and far-famed was Thuringia" in those good days.

But here is the very man, in two fine episodes which Dietrich for some reason has omitted.

Certain Thuringian traders had been robbed and maltreated about Lubitz in Poland. The Landgrave looked into their complaints and demanded prompt reparation. "A far cry from Thuringia," thought Duke Lesko V, and simply ignored the matter. Whereupon the sun of July 15th, 1225—the Feast of the Separation of the Apostles, it was afterwards remembered—glittered for some hours on a formidable array marching eastward from Eisenach; no one knew whither. At Leipzig, where fresh contingents joined, Saxon vassals and Misnian troops contributed by

half-sister Jutta and her Duke, Lewis made known his purpose and destination. Conceive the amazed looks and the flare of scorn. What, a chapman's war ! Barons and nobles in damaskeened steel to take the field for hucksters and hawkers ! Lewis was adamant. Henceforth the poorest subject in Thuringia should know that his Landgrave had the will to protect and the power to avenge him.

Over the Polish border then swept these novel champions, sacked and burnt down Lubitz town, and invested the stronghold on the hill. Duke Lesko, taken aback, bewildered indeed, hurried off messengers with remonstrances, explanations, offers of compensation. Too late for amenities and flourishing of cap-feathers, replied the Landgrave, " I do not come so far from home for nothing " ; and pressed on with the siege. Ill at ease, but blustering, and counting for some effect on the splendour of the Church, Lesko sent some imposing ecclesiastic to declare his high displeasure at the Landgrave's proceedings, to warn him of Polish prowess,

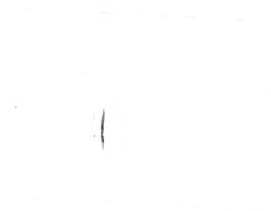
and to give him some days' grace in which to withdraw from his dangerous position. All which Lewis answered with courteous irony, dinged down Castle Lubitz, and marched home at his leisure, by no means the poorer for the expedition.

So, for a time at least, a sort of *Pax Thuringiana* safeguarded even hawkers and hucksters going honestly about their concerns, as far afield as Poland. The prestige of such a condition of things struck the world at large, and damaskened persons began to realize that Iron Lewis was very much alive still in his grandson—a view which was strongly confirmed some weeks later.

At one of the great fairs at Eisenach a few years back, the Landgrave, wandering among the booths and stalls and chatting affably with the chapmen, spoke to a poor pedlar whose pack of merchandise—thimbles, needles, leaden images, spoons, and cheap trinkets—seemed little enough to live upon. "I should not fare ill, Highness," the man told him, "if I could get in safety from town

to town ; ay, and like enough there would be a trifle at the year's end to increase the stock." Pleased with his cheery courage, the Landgrave granted him a safe-conduct and freedom from tax and duty, and giving him a sum of money, went humorously into partnership with him.

The pedlar's trade increased steadily, and all had gone well with the new firm. Shortly after the Landgrave's return from Lubitz, however, the good fellow appeared at the Wartburg with a grievous tale of outrage and loss. He had been in Italy, and had brought from Venice a fine stock of brooches and rings, necklets and jewelled head-gear, ivory work, coral beads, and what not. Certain Franconians had seen his goods set out for sale at Wurtzburg, waylaid him, torn up his safe-conduct, and carried off his ass and the merchandise. By a happy chance he had himself escaped. "My good partner," said the Landgrave, "do not take this to heart, but leave me to recover our stock-in-trade and our excellent ass."





Forthwith Franconian fields began to smoke ; troopers rode up and down seeking a certain ass and its baggage, the chattels of our Landgrave, and spreading waste to the gates of Wurtzburg. At the news of which swift-handed justice the Prince-Bishop bestirred himself, made short shrift of the thieves, and restored ass and pack to his Highness. " An uplifted land and far-famed was Thuringia in those days."

Earlier than these events, probably in the spring of the year, a simple but far-reaching change occurred in the charmed life of Elizabeth. Friar Rodinger had been appointed prior of the distant monastery of Halberstadt, and the question of another confessor and spiritual guide arose. Lewis appears to have consulted Ugolino, Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, who had travelled in Germany and was acquainted with all the great families. Ugolino was a kinsman of Innocent III, and was within a year or two to ascend the papal throne as Gregory IX. He recommended the choice of the devout and learned Master

Conrad of Marburg, at that moment, as the Landgrave was naturally well aware, Envoy Apostolic in these countries.

Master Conrad, says Dietrich, "shone out like a clear star in Almain among the just and perfect men by whom God upheld His Church. He desired neither wealth nor ecclesiastical preferment, but was content to appear in the humble garb of a priest as a champion of the Catholic faith and a raider of heretics." Fiery and eloquent, he went up and down Germany on his mule, arousing the Crusader spirit as far back as 1216, and after that date interposing in various controversies and causes as papal representative, and dealing grimly with the wild forms of infidelity and revolt which were overrunning Europe at that time. Pale and austere, one figures him, cold in manner, past middle age; a religious man, doubtless, "according to his lights," but narrow and without vision; a man who lived in dread of God rather than through love of Him; a formalist in whom the fires of a fanatic smouldered; a staunch

and fearless promoter of ecclesiastical supremacy.

He was received with profound reverence at the Wartburg, and no stronger proof could be given of the absolute trust, not only of the girlish wife but of the clear-headed Landgrave, in his wisdom and his holiness than that both consented to the condition on which alone he would undertake her spiritual guidance—a pledge of entire obedience in all things that did not touch her husband's authority. In the humility of her heart and her eagerness to be led nearer to God, Elizabeth gave her promise, ignoring her rank and compromising her responsibilities as the mistress of a great State. She scarcely realized the extent of the obligation. Some time afterwards Master Conrad desired her presence at one of his sermons. Agnes, the Duchess of Misnia, had arrived on a visit, and Elizabeth was unable to attend. Master Conrad brusquely sent word that he had ceased to be her director. She hastened to him as soon as possible, but he refused to accept

her excuses or regrets. He was hardly prevailed upon to forgive her when she threw herself at his feet with her maidens, whom he blamed for some share in her offence, and whom he "chastised with stripes."

He next exacted a solemn engagement—readily enough conceded by a young heart to which any second love was inconceivable—that if she should survive her husband she would live thenceforth in perpetual and holy widowhood.

So far, and with so little of the joyful vision of St. Francis, with so little in the spirit of the Divine Exemplar during His earthly sojourn, the rigid formalist imposed his claims upon a simple and innocent soul whose one dream was conformity to the will of God and complete union with Him.

It was, however, something beyond enforcement of the absolute submission which to the ecclesiastical mind is the virtue of virtues, that led Master Conrad to prescribe an extraordinary course of discipline to his penitent. His action has been explained as

a protest against the retention of property wrested from the Church in old quarrels, the extortion of officials, the oppression of the poor, though it is difficult to reconcile oppression and extortion with Lewis's vigilance and sharp justice. Whatever the motive may have been, the Landgravine was bound "under obedience" to abstain from all food which she could not with a clear conscience regard as coming direct from the personal estate or the just revenues of her husband. It was laid upon her to ascertain the source from which every dish, every loaf of bread, every cup of beverage was derived.

Many a day Elizabeth sat in the great hall at her husband's side dallying with the forbidden food, pretending to eat, and covering her abstinence by her gracious attention to the wants of those about her. Sometimes she had to be content with a small wild bird, sometimes with cakes and honey, sometimes with plain bread, but not unfrequently she and her ladies of honour, who shared her privations with her, rose from table as they had sat

down, and hunger compelled her to provide for them and herself in private out of her own purse. The restriction held good abroad no less than at home. Before she sat down at other tables the necessary inquiries were impossible, and to avoid the risk of disobedience the scrupulous soul denied herself all but the sheerest necessaries. On one journey she rode forty miles on no more food than a crust of bread soaked in warm water.

The account reads like a pious story to inculcate heroic self-submission, but it is Isentrude who tells it, and a light-hearted gaiety which breaks through it and can be only Elizabeth's gives it the colour of truth. When it chanced, for example, that the Landgravine found on inquiry of the stewards that the one permissible thing on the table would be the meat, "To-day," she would say, "we shall only eat"; or if it were the wine alone that might be touched, "To-day we shall only drink"; but when there were both meat and drink to be had, "How

lovely!" she would cry, clapping her hands gleefully; "now we shall both eat and drink."

At eighteen Elizabeth was still but a playful girl, though there was a babe in her arms and two small mortals hung about her dress.

The autumn of this year brought a poor harvest, and there were already signs of a distressful winter when the Landgrave was summoned across the Alps to aid the Emperor Frederick II in quelling the revolt of Bologna and other Lombard cities. It was their first long parting, and the great snow mountains would rise between them; but for all her docility and meekness Elizabeth was of race royal; in her veins ran the blood of Árpád and Charlemagne, and the love which overflowed in tears at their separation was not her weakness, but her strength. Without a shadow of misgiving Lewis committed Thuringia to her rule and the welfare of his people during the anxious season that was approaching.

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Master Conrad appears to have been absent from Eisenach at this time. Some special mission may have called him away, or he may have been abroad on the duties of a new charge, for in the extraordinary trust which Lewis placed in his judgment and rectitude, he had invested him with the control of benefices and the visitation of religious houses. For the present he passes out of Elizabeth's life.

The Red Cross

THAT winter the pot froze on the fire, as they say ; and the anguish of the cold was sharpened by want. Within a few weeks the lamentation of a “ great hunger ’ was heard through the land. The needy went forth into field and forest, seeking for mast, nuts and berries ; gathering herbs and mosses, grubbing roots, stripping bark from the dead pines to grind into meal ; bringing down rook and jackdaw ; following the tracks of wolf and badger ; trapping small birds, rabbits, squirrels, hedgehogs, field-mice, vermin of all sorts. Hard upon hunger came sickness and disease, and poor creatures wandering in search of food crept into caves and hollow banks to die, or dropped down in the snow by the roadside.

Elizabeth’s heart ached with pity. She

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distributed to the sufferers throughout the Duchy all the ready money in the treasury. In spite of the protests of the stewards of the household she threw open the granaries, but to prevent abuse of her gifts she had great ovens built, and huge batches of bread were baked and distributed individually day after day. Supplies were carried down the mountain for the aged and infirm ; and as sickness and distress increased she ordered the erection of two more hospitals in Eisenach.

Her solicitude was not confined to giving. She herself was present everywhere, cheering, consoling, checking waste, sharply reproving the idle and vicious. The drain upon the resources at her command was immense, for the famine prevailed over a wide region, and her benevolence and watchfulness extended to the most distant of the Landgrave's estates. She insisted on the revenue of Thuringia, Hesse, the Saxon Palatinate, and Osterland being expended on the relief of the people ; and in order that she might

herself have an intimate share in alleviating the miseries of her subjects, she sold the most precious of her jewels, and the massive silver cradle in which she had been brought as a child to Thuringia.

The discontent and not too respectful criticism of the Landgrave's agents and treasurers preserved her from the subtle complacency which makes giving easy, but neither remonstrance nor accusations of folly and wastefulness could move her a hair's-breadth from the conviction that the first duty of a prince is the preservation of his people.

The disastrous winter came to an end. The Landgrave, disquieted by the tidings from home and anxious to relieve Elizabeth of the heavy burden which had been laid upon her, obtained the Emperor's leave to return. On the hills round Cremona he saw St. John's fires reddening the summer night. Crossing the Alps, he reached Augsburg on the 2nd July, and was detained there a fortnight on imperial affairs. Fifteen days later, on

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Friday at nones—the green gloom of the familiar pines and beeches vastly cool and pleasant under the high afternoon sun—he arrived at the Wartburg. Elizabeth's arms were locked about his neck; "a thousand times and more," says Berthold the chaplain, "she kissed him with her heart and with her mouth"; then, as he held her away from him a little and looked into her glad eyes, "Dear sister," he asked, "what became of your poor people during this weary winter?" "I gave God what was His," she answered softly, "and God has kept for us what was yours and mine."

Long before he had reached home the anxious treasurers and stewards had met him with reports and account-books, in a voluble hurry to lay the blame of empty coffers and barns on the prodigal charity of the Princess. "Let her do good and give to God whatever she will," replied Lewis, "so long as she leaves me Wartburg and Neuenburg."

His return was hailed with joy by the



grateful population, but the Landgrave soon discovered that his brief absence had been long enough for unruly spirits to forget the heavy hand of his justice. At his favourite Reinhartsbrunn the Abbot pointed out to him a hill-fort commanding the Abbey and its fertile valley. My lord of Salza had snapped up their high pasture on Aldenberg, made his eyrie on the heights, and continually harassed the monks and their tenantry. On the morrow, in the grey glimmer of the twilight before dawn a troop from Eisenach reached Reinhartsbrunn. The Landgrave, who had heard Mass, begged that the solemn services—it was Sunday—should be delayed until he could attend them. A surprise party stole up the mountain; the scaling-ladders were planted; the fort was carried and my lord of Salza taken prisoner. As the Abbey bells swung out a joy-peal and the procession issued from the cloisters, the lawless knight and his men-at-arms were led in chains before the great cross; Lewis and his

people followed it, and the monks chanted the antiphon :

“Tu humiliasti sicut vulneratum superbum :

In brachio virtutis tuæ dispersisti inimicos tuos.”

“Thou hast cast down the proud as a man wounded :
In the strength of thy arm thou hast scattered thine
enemies.”

The fort was levelled to the ground, and Salza was released on his oath never again to molest the brotherhood.

Even in Franconia his lesson of the ass had been forgotten ; but certain “honourable” marauders who had “conveyed” various horses and some excellent wine he sent back with their spoil to the Abbey—barefoot, in their shirts, with ropes round their necks.

It was not wise to break laws and commandments when this Landgrave was anywhere within striking distance.

All through the summer and autumn of 1226 there was a mighty stir among the States of Germany. By the treaty of San Germano the departure of the Crusade pro-

jected by Pope Innocent had been fixed for the following year. Papal legates—Master Conrad of Marburg, no doubt, among them—were reawakening among the Northern populations the fiery enthusiasm of old days. Already a large number of the princes had been won over by the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. In castle and city, thorpe and forest-homestead there was a sound of preparation for this great seafaring to Jerusalem. The common folk were as eager to set out as their betters,

“ Graf and ritter and many a knight,
That would afresh the heathen fight.”

Large numbers had long been pledged to the undertaking—as far back as 1220 Pope Honorius had pinned the cross to the Kaiser’s breast ; now in this crowding to the banners of the Faith the chivalrous Landgrave could not lag behind the example of his uncle Lewis, who had fallen at Damietta. At Hildesheim then, after an earnest conference with the Bishop, he accepted the “ red

Christ-flower " from his hands. On his homeward journey, however, he realized the needless anxieties and misgivings which Elizabeth would suffer before his departure if she were at once made aware that he had joined the Crusaders ; and with the intention that she should live through one unclouded season of gladness before their parting, he concealed the badge in the purse which hung at his belt.

And never had they more blissful days together than these in the warm light of St. Martin's summer, when all the forest beneath them rolled away to the hills in billows of gold and sombre green and ruddy brown, and the last of the migrants gathered for their flight to the lands of the southern sun. Blissful, too, as it had never been before, was the hard winter which clotted the roofs with snow and hung icicles on the stony eaves, and the cold wind in the rocking pines sounded like a mighty Minnesong. For, uneasily conscious of the parting that was to come, and of the long days when she would

be alone, vexing her heart with thoughts of how he fared and fearful of every rumour, Lewis made her his companion wherever he went abroad ; and seeking most to remain at home,

“ He compassed her with sweet observances
And worship, never leaving her.”

One evening, as they were talking together, Elizabeth playfully loosened the Landgrave's belt and began to examine the contents of his purse. Lewis held his breath, but made no attempt to prevent her. Perhaps it was God's will that she should know now. Laughing gaily as she laid this thing and that in her lap, she drew out at length the badge of red cloth. She spoke not a word, but gazed from it to him ; her face grew white, and she fell forward in a dead swoon.

When consciousness returned, “ Dear sister,” he said, as he held her in his arms, “ what I have done is for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and this, indeed, is no more than such service as I could not have refused to the Kaiser, my earthly liege-lord,

had he asked for it." But Elizabeth's heart was too full for speech ; and after she had sat for a great while with the tears running silently down her face, " Dear brother," she said, " stay with me, if it be not against the will of God " ; and " Oh, dear sister," he answered, " give me leave to go, for so I have vowed." Then Elizabeth " gave her will unto God's will," and said, " I would not keep you against God's good liking. And may God grant you ever to do as He would have you. You and me I have offered up to Him. In the holy name you shall ride forth."

Now that there was no longer need for secrecy, Lewis busied himself with plans and precautions for the public welfare and the prudent management of his estates during his absence. He summoned a convention of the principalities at Kreuzburg, and earnestly impressed upon barons and magnates, nobles and commons, the necessity for righteous government and submission to the laws. Without these the land could know neither peace nor prosperity. For the love

of God and their welfare he would willingly go forth in His name, leaving wife and children, dear brothers, rich possessions, kinsfolk, neighbours, friends, and men of goodwill. For this service of the Lord no tax or toll should be laid upon his people. All cost and charges he should pay from his own substance, for all that he possessed had been of God's giving. But he would beseech them to pray that, if it pleased God's mercy, he should be brought safely home to them, "for in all things I submit myself and you my subjects to His most high Majesty."

Great lords and soldiers, says Dietrich, "were moved as they listened to him, and the eyes of strong men grew dim, and all the dwellers in the land lamented the departure of a prince so gracious and so dear."

When house and State had been put in order, and his brother Heinrich Raspé appointed Regent during his absence, the great adventure ran so continually in his mind that it well-nigh seemed that he was already

in Palestine having sight of Jerusalem and the holy hills; and the thought came to him how he might share with his people such a living picture of the Passion of the Lord that it would be an everlasting remembrance between him and them.

Three years before this crowds of peasants had come on Christmas Eve to St. Francis at his desire, making the woods of Rieti alive with lights, and in the church he had shown them a stable with straw, and an ox and an ass tethered to the manger, and had told them of the shepherds in the field and the Virgin Mother homeless in Bethlehem, and the birth of the divine child, so that all wept with pity and with joy. Now, at the bidding of the Landgrave, a pageant or stage was erected, and the monks and friars disguised themselves and showed the very image of the betrayal and death of the Lord Jesus as it had happened near twelve hundred years gone by. Twice was this spectacle presented in the little grey town of Eisenach to great throngs of people, and these were so wrought

upon with sorrow and with wrath against the heathen that more stout men were eager to serve under the Landgrave's banner than he could take with him.

Then he visited the religious houses, bestowing generous gifts and asking for the prayers of the brethren. Among the Benedictines at Reinhartsbrunn, which was most dear to him, he stood beside the priest who sprinkled the religious with holy water when they left the choir after compline ; and as the monks passed him he embraced them one by one, old and young, and bade them farewell, and the little scholars he took up in his arms and kissed them. All were moved to tears at the departure of their gracious protector. His own eyes were wet ; and foreseeing the days to come, " Not without reason do you lament," he said ; " for when I am gone, savage wolves will fall upon you, and I not here to guard you. Yet am I very sure that the Most High, mindful of my pilgrimage, will have compassion upon you in

His good time. Now and ever I beseech this for you in all my prayers.”

His Highness was in chief command of the Central German contingents of the Crusaders, and Schmalkalden, several leagues southward in the forest, was their rendezvous. It was a town of smiths and cunning workers in iron in the heart of the iron country, strongly fenced with fosse and double iron-stone ramparts. Thither Lewis set out with all his family in the latter part of June, passing on the wayside above Liebenstein the great crucifix on the jutting rock where Winfrid had preached long ago.

At Schmalkalden he forgathered with the barons, counts, and ritters from all parts of the Palatinate, Thuringia and Hesse. Many old friends were there—the lords of Mühlberg, Brandenburg, Stolberg ; Rudolf, son of old Walther von Varila, and, as I would fain fancy, the grey Minnesinger Walther von der Vogelweide, who took the cross and went overseas on this adventure.

It was the vigil of the nativity of St. John,

when girls frolicked in the flax-fields and bathed, as it were, in the dewy blue flowers of the flax ; and the midsummer fires blazed on the hills—old-world fires of the pagan gods, but their wickedness was purged away, and now they were kindled in honour of St. John, the Precursor of the Light of the World. Men and women, lads and maids, sang and danced about the fires, and they threw flowers and herbs into the flames, wreaths of wormwood and wolf's-bane and blue larkspur, so that even as these were burnt up, all their troubles and cares might also pass away in smoke and flame.

That was a night to remember in after-time—the fires glowing on the hills, the far-away sounds of merriment and music and singing, the hum and iron stir of armed men in the wakeful town, the clear weather-gleam half-circling the dusky forest-tops, and the summer stars silent overhead.

Long, long did “ Brother ” and “ Sister ” talk together that night of all the things that lay nearest to their hearts. And not

without tears they spoke of the babe which Lewis was never to look upon with his living eyes. "If it should be a little maid," he said, "let her be our thank-offering, yours and mine, for all the good years which God has given us to be together; and place her with the nuns of St. Norbert at Altenberg (which is near Wetzlar town). But if it be a boy, let him go to the Abbey of Romersdorf."

That night too, I like to fancy, Walther the Minnesinger, looking out on the forest and the midsummer fires and thinking of the morrow, composed his Crusader-song :

*" Du süsse wahre Minne,
Geleite schwache Sinne !"*

" Sweet Love, true Love, be ever
Aid of our weak endeavour ;
O Love, Thou Son of God,
Stand by Thy Christendom !"

Early on St. John's Day, when Mass had been heard, and the priest had given his farewell blessing and the troops were ready to

march, there came the hard moment of separation. 'Twas a world of lament, says Dietrich, as parents parted from their children and men from their wives to go forth for love of the Faith.

“Erat in exercitu maximus tumultus.”

“Heavy sorrow shook the host, from sighs to outcry
ranging,
When they saw the colour of their dear ones’ faces
changing.
All were weeping, young and old, both lowly folk and
noble,
Men-at-arms and serfs and townsmen, in their
common trouble.
Eya! who could weeping help, to see such lamenta-
tions,
Worthy lords so many, and so many divers nations,
Saxon men, Thuringian men, come hither fondly
caring
Friends and comrades old to see before their seaward
faring?”

For the last time Lewis besought his brothers Heinrich and Conrad to have his wife and his little ones in their loving care, and as he reminded them of his trust in their

gentleness and staunch affection, they gave him their promises with tears falling. Then he caught up the children, who were holding by his dress, and kissed them again and again ; and they hugged him and wished him good night in their childish fashion, " Many thousand good nights, dear papa ! "

But when he embraced Elizabeth he could scarce speak to her ; and drawing his mother to him within one arm and Elizabeth within the other, he held them, crying silently, and kissing them both. To make an end the chaplains, and the soldiers who had wept sorrow dry in their distant homes, raised their voices in one of the Crusader songs. Then the Landgrave tore himself away. Mounting his horse, he took his place among the knights, and the march of the host of the Christ-flower began amid a tumult of singing and lamentation.

Close at hand ("not afar off," says Dietrich, thinking, it would seem, of the "many women" of whom St. Matthew speaks) that most faithful lady, Elizabeth,

followed her sweetest prince, her most loving husband, whom never, ah me! was she to see more. When she drew rein and was about to turn homeward, the strength of love and the anguish of parting compelled her to accompany him all that day's journey. When to-morrow came she could not leave him, and all the long road of that day she fared onward by his side.

“ Thus was to-day still mirrored in to-morrow;
And as she further fared in love and sorrow,
Love's sorrowful need was further still to fare.”

But the love of the Creator, strong as death, broke these lingering delays of the love of His creatures, and when Rudolf the Cup-bearer said, “ Dear lady, it is not well that you should go further with my lord,” she bowed her head in submission. They parted, and went upon their separate ways; but “ with what sobs, think you, with what clinging, with what wild throbbing of the heart? ”

She returned to her home; the tears were on her cheeks. She laid aside the raiment of

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joy, and clothed herself in the dark robes of widowhood. "Sitting solitary, the lady of nations, the mistress of principalities, she turned herself to God wholly, and added to her former good works better ones."

“The World is Dead”

AS the last sound of grief was stilled and troop after troop wound along the forest roads, the Landgrave recovered the alert mind and the serenity of a true leader of men.

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart,
’Tis woman’s whole existence. . . .
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if ’tis lost, life hath no more to bring.”

Again and again, indeed, his thoughts flew to Eisenach. Visual gleams of memory brought back Elizabeth to him, the gallant little man who was to be Landgrave after him when his own work was done, the gay little maidens whose prattling voices were full of bird-cries. Then he fell to musing on the little life which was to be his thank-offering and hers. But the great affairs of his station pressed upon him with ever-increasing details.

Barons and knight-riders joined him with fresh companies as they traversed the woodlands of Franconia and Suabia. Threading the romantic defiles of Tyrol, he crossed the mountains into Italy.

The towns and villages of the vast Lombard plain were alive with rumours of the mighty host which was gathering at long-last for the recovery of the blessed Sepulchre. Honorius III had died in March, bitterly chagrined by the procrastinations of the Kaiser Frederick. His successor (Gregory IX) was Ugolino, Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, the patron and protector of St. Francis, by whose keen statecraft we have seen the "seraphic" Order transformed into one of the ascetic legions of the Church. He was very old now—eighty years and upward—but his eye was not dim, the fire of empery glowed in his veins, and he had vowed his luminous intellect and iron will to the realization of the great papal projects of his predecessors. Under his stern gaze this Crusade was to be obstructed no longer by vacillation and delay.

In August Lewis was received with open arms by the Emperor at Troja. Thence they marched together to Brindisi, the seaport for the East. Italians, Germans, French, there were now some sixty thousand men in harness. Frederick was doubtless well aware of the Landgrave's military skill and summary justice; the frank gaiety, the free-handedness, the mere youth of the yellow-haired paladin at once won his friendship. The Kaiser was thirty-three; Lewis twenty-seven—both in the flower of manhood.

One pauses for a moment before this imperial figure, the most brilliant in the thirteenth century, so unlike any other in that age, and so anticipative of the brighter spirits of the Renaissance. Grandson of the chivalrous Barbarossa; a poet revelling in literature, music, and art; a scholar thirsting for Oriental wisdom and the lore of Athens and Alexandria; a sovereign who looked with a genial philosophic impartiality on every race and creed in his large empire; a statesman who fenced the bluff force of the

West with the astuteness and guile of the East, Frederick II must have appeared to the sacerdotalism of his time a very incarnation of the World, probably of the Flesh, and certainly of "the lost Archangel." Michael Scott the Wizard—who rang the bells of Notre Dame with a stamp of his demon steed; who also translated Aristotle, quite a pagan person—was his chief astrologer. He horrified the piety of a crusading epoch by declaring that if God had seen his Sicily, He would never have selected the barren tracts of Palestine for the Chosen People. Daring he was in thought and irreverent in speech, but most of the scepticism with which he was charged was probably no more than his gaily ironic criticism of the corruption, superstition, and folly of his age.

All the plans of the campaign and the project of restoring the Latin kingdom were discussed between Frederick and the Landgrave on the isle of S. Andrea; but unhappily, during these conferences, whether

it was that the island itself was infected or because of the malarious winds blowing off the land, both were stricken with fever. All this low coast, indeed, was haunted by pestilence, which was rapidly thinning the ranks of the Crusaders.

The order was at once given to embark, and in the first week of September the tall castled ships with their red-crossed sails crowded out to sea. The cold and freshness of the large air brought no relief, and three days later the fleet put into Otranto. The Empress Yolande was residing in that city, and the Landgrave in his chivalrous courtesy went to present her his homage. On his return to his ship he took to his bed. The end approached rapidly. He called to his side the five counts who had accompanied him, Rudolf his Cup-bearer, Gunther von Kefernburg, Meinhard von Mühlberg, and the rest, and begged them not to leave him in a foreign land, but to bear him home to his grave at Reinhartsbrunn. And this they promised him.

Then he besought them for the last rites of the Church, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Bishop of Santa Cruce administered the sacraments of Extreme Unction and the holy Viaticum. When his death was very near, his face suddenly brightened, and he asked those about him, "Do you not see these doves, how white they are?" for it seemed to him that the ship's cabin was filled with a flock of doves whiter than snow. Those watching by him thought he was wandering in his mind. After a little while he spoke again, "I must fly away with these shining doves." And so, falling asleep in the Lord, he departed in peace to his own country on the 11th day of September, 1227.

When his death was made known in the fleet his people were vehemently distressed, and out of intolerable grief they raised a wild "Ululu!" so that the sea rang with voices and the beating of hands. "Alas, hero!" they cried, "alas, master! how hast thou left us exiles in an alien land! How have we lost thee, light of our eyes, leader

of our pilgrimage, hope of our return ! ” They laid the body of their Prince in the tomb until they could bear it home, and setting sail again they went upon the long way of their pilgrimage.

Many of the Crusaders dispersed to their homes during the Kaiser’s illness. Once more the departure of the long-expected expedition had come to nothing. On his recovery Frederick found the aged Pontiff his implacable enemy. He was solemnly excommunicated on the 29th September, the feast of St. Michael, and an interdict was laid on every place in which he might venture to linger. Christendom was to see the struggle between the spiritual and the temporal power renewed, and men who had known the winning sweetness and gentle fervour of the Saint of Assisi must have marvelled as they beheld the Grey Friars who still bore his name rousing the subjects of an emperor to rebellion.

It was but three months since the Landgrave

had left Thuringia in the strength and beauty of his manhood ; three months since the return of Elizabeth to the Wartburg. After the first keen anguish of parting, which had overborne her very soul, communion with her crucified Saviour, absorption of self into the Divine Will restored her peace and serenity ; and who can doubt that in the companionship of her children, listening to their birdlike chatter, watching their merry play, her old gaiety returned to her ? Affairs of State were no longer a burden laid upon her ; but she had her own kingdom of poverty and disease, old age and trouble, which required a large revenue and ever-watchful administration, and Lewis had provided that she should not be thwarted or fretted in her works of mercy.

From time to time messengers arrived at the castle with letters from the Prince ; wandering friars and traders brought her news of his progress. They had seen the Red Cross companies in the glades of Tyrol ; they had met them in an Alpine pass ; they

had spoken to the Landgrave in some Lombard town on the road that skirts the Adriatic to Rimini. As the days shortened, and the woods coloured, and all the season told of change and departure, doubt not that she stood with her eyes turned to the south, and that her heart flew the way of the swallows.

September drew to a close, and on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, while the aged Pope was hurling “ the thunders which turn souls to ashes,” her babe was born. Their thank-offering was a “ little maid,” and Elizabeth gave her the name of Gertrude, in memory of her mother.

I know not how many hours or days after this event some comrade-in-arms who had stood by his grave in Brindisi reached Eisenach with the news of the Landgrave’s death. Grief and consternation spread through the land. Overwhelmed with her own loss, the Duchess Sophia was moved with pity for her daughter-in-law. The knowledge of what had happened was care-

fully concealed from her until she appeared to be strong enough to bear the shock. Then, with an aching heart, the Duchess and some of her ladies visited Elizabeth in her own apartment. She received them with her habitual sweetness, and prayed them to be seated about her bed.

“Dear daughter,” said the Duchess, “be brave, and do not be agitated by what, in the divine dispensation, has befallen your husband, my dear son.”

Supposing that Lewis had perchance fallen into the power of some enemies, as had once well-nigh happened, but with never a thought of his death, “If my brother is held prisoner,” replied Elizabeth, “with the help of God and our friends he can be set free.”

“He is dead,” said the Duchess.

Elizabeth clasped her knees with her fingers knotted together. “The world is dead to me,” she said, “and all that was pleasant in the world.”

Then, springing up suddenly, she fled crying through the great hall and gallery ;

and being beside herself, she would have run anywhither but that a wall stopped her ; and she clung to it, as one clings to a great rock in a wild sea. Thence the ladies and her maidens, weeping for pity, led her gently away.

Outcast

A LITTLE year ago, and even in the blustering winter the roar of the pine trees was a jubilant Minnesong. Now the surging forest seemed full of voices lamentable, recalling the strong man dead, the strong just man who plucked down robber-towers and stripped honourable thieves to the shirt.

Lewis was cold in his grave. The brothers had repudiated the trust to which they had pledged themselves with tears. If ever sounds from earth can vex the peace of departed souls, the most grievous must be the widow's cry :

“ He had not dared to do it,
Except he surely knew my lord was dead.”

Evil counsellors, lawless men, parasites, some of them the persecutors of Elizabeth's

girlhood, had obtained the confidence of the princes, who were eager to throw off all restraint. On the plea that the treasury had been impoverished by Elizabeth's prodigality the allowance assigned by Lewis for her benevolent purposes was stopped. The revenues from her marriage settlement were misappropriated, and the most meagre pittance was granted for her maintenance. Then Heinrich, unscrupulously adopting the suggestion that, by the old Thuringian law, the principalities belonged of right to the oldest living male representative of the family, threw aside all pretence of protectorship, and declared himself Landgrave.

The intriguers counted on the Landgravine being too meek and devout to offer any opposition, but the motherly instinct had awakened in Elizabeth, and she firmly resisted the attempt to despoil and disinherit her children. Alas, the staunch friends whose swords would have leaped out in her husband's cause and hers were far beyond the seas. For a time probably the fate of her

little son trembled in the scales, but the shrewder or more cowardly knaves deprecated needless bloodshed. The same object might be attained by driving child and mother from their home. For the honour of womanhood one can but hope that the Duchess Sophia protested against this wickedness, but if she interposed, her efforts were unavailing.

In the falling dusk of a midwinter day, alone, barely twenty years old, the daughter of a long line of kings, Elizabeth went down the rugged track from the castle, an outcast. Could King Andreas have met her on her dolorous way, how the sight of his child would have whipped the sin of his own cruel usurpation! She entered Eisenach. The townspeople had been forbidden to give her assistance. A few months ago, at the representation of the betrayal and death of Christ, the crowds had wept and cried out with anger, and cursed the Saracens; on this winter night not a door was opened to the widow of their dead Landgrave. Elizabeth could

not have forgotten the hospitals and the asylum for children which she had founded. She did not take refuge there. Beyond the Gallows Gate was the Convent of St. Catherine ; the good sisters could not refuse her their charity. She did not sleep under their roof. There in his sculptured tomb reposed the old Landgrave Hermann, who had loved her. An old Árpád king once rose from his tomb at the cry of his people ; Hermann who had loved her made no sign.

At length she went to an inn, where any one may lawfully abide, but even the inn-keeper was afraid of violence ; but in the courtyard there was a shed in which he kept empty casks and jars, and the mere enclosure took the sting from the winter air. There she rested, and thanked God joyfully that she, too, had not where to lay her head. At midnight the bells of the Grey Friars rang for matins. It was her own church, and she hastened through the frosty streets, all dark save where here and there a dim light glimmered before a crucifix or the Virgin Mother

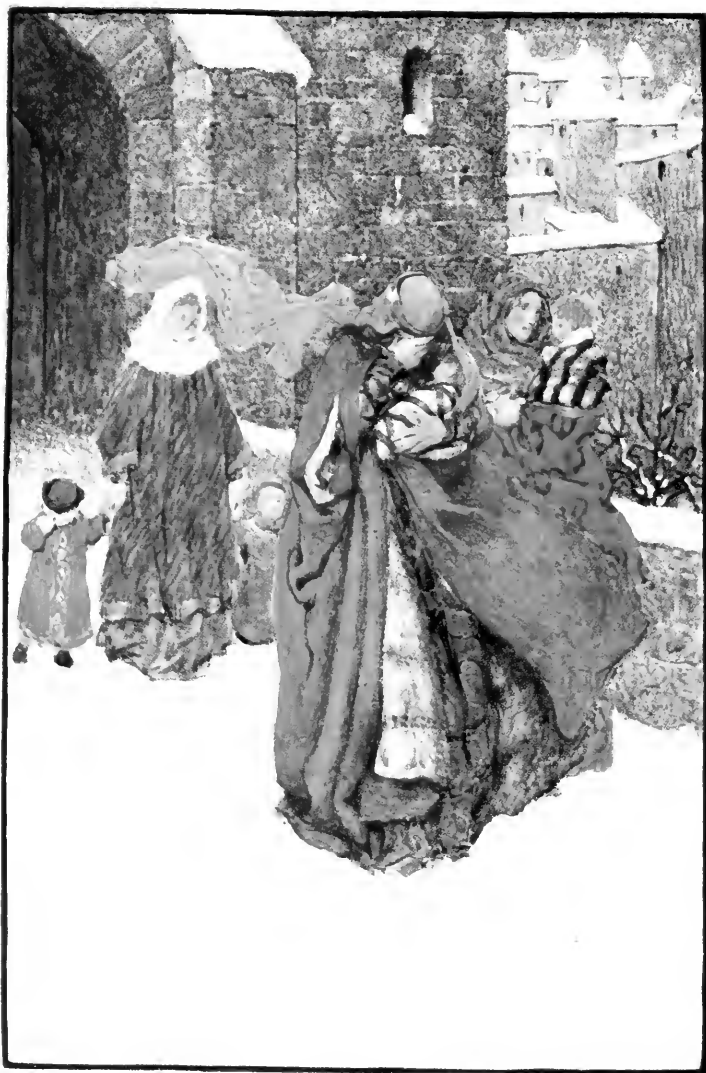
and her Child. When matins and lauds were over she begged the friars to sing on her behalf *Te Deum laudamus*, and that mighty hymn lifted up her fainting soul as on glorious wings into the heaven of heavens :

“ *Per singulos dies benedicimus te* ”—

“ Day by day we magnify thee ;

And we worship thy name ever, world without end.”

Next day came the ladies Jutta and Isentrude bringing her the children. It was aching cold, and Elizabeth threw her arms piteously about them, saying, “ May God so love me, I know not whither to turn, or where to rest your little bodies, though all the lordship of this town is yours, dear son.” When she gave her ladies leave to depart Jutta and Isentrude would not forsake her : “ Where you go, madam, we also shall go ; and where your Highness is, there shall we be.” Then Elizabeth spoke cheerfully, “ Since men will not be our hosts, to-day we shall ask God to take us for His guests,” and she led them into a church, where they had



Ar. Outpost

shelter nearly all that day, until an aged priest came and bade them be welcome under his poor roof. Then Elizabeth put in pledge such small jewels as she wore and bought food for them all.

Now whether some low sound of hissing went up to the Wartburg or Duchess Sophia cried shame upon these wrongs, the Landgravine and her family were removed to the abode of a wealthy townsman. The house was rich and spacious, but they were crowded into a little corner, and host and hostess used them so despitefully that Elizabeth would not remain. Looking round the walls as she left, she thanked them that they had rid away the sleet and rain and icy wind. "Men, too," she said, "I would gladly thank, but I know not wherefore." She returned to her first sordid shelter in the inn-yard, for there was no other refuge. As need drove her, she begged Jutta and Isentrude to take her children away to distant friends, so that the little creatures should not die of cold and hunger.

Great miseries we may bear unscathed, the mean ones pierce to the heart's root. Once in these dark days as Elizabeth passed through a narrow lane where there were stepping-stones across the deep mud, an evil old woman whom she had clothed and fed pushed her off the stones so that she fell, and hobbled away with mocking laughter. "If we knock a third time," said St. Francis to Brother Leo, "and bring out the porter, fierce with rage, crying, 'Ah, bold and sturdy rogues, now I will pay you,' and if he catches us by the hood, and hurls us to the ground, and rolls us in the snow, belabouring us knot for knot with his cudgel, and all this we bear with patience and with gladness, thinking of the blessed Lord's pains which we should endure for love of Him, then write down that, Brother Leo, as 'perfect joy.'" And the joy of St. Francis was the joy of Elizabeth.

In the midst of her afflictions she was vouchsafed raptures of the soul which fall to the portion of the saints only. On a certain day in Lent—so long had the cruelty and

baseness of her kinsmen prevailed—she knelt leaning against the wall and gazing long and long with eyes fixed on the altar. When at length she returned to her lowly refuge she took the least little fragment of food, for her weakness was extreme. A great sweat broke out upon her, and as she supported herself against the wall Isentrude drew her into her lap. Her eyes were turned intently towards the open window. At last she laughed softly, and her face was shining with joy. After a long hour she closed her eyes and shed innumerable tears; then in a little while she opened her eyes again, laughing most joyfully as before. She lay in that taking until compline, sometimes weeping with closed eyes and for a little while, sometimes laughing with open eyes, but always much longer in gladness than in grief. After she had remained silent a great time, “So, Lord,” she exclaimed, “if Thou wouldest be with me, I would be with Thee, and I wish never to be parted from Thee!”

“To whom do you speak, madam?”

Isentrude asked, and pressed her to tell, and after much hesitation Elizabeth yielded. "I saw heaven open," she said, "and my sweet Lord Jesus leaning down to me and comforting me for the straits and tribulations which have encompassed me. When I saw Him I was joyful and laughed, but when He turned away His face as though to leave me I wept. But He took compassion on me and turned His most serene countenance towards me, saying, 'If thou dost wish to be with Me, I desire to be with thee'; and I answered as you heard." But when Isentrude asked her of the vision in the church Elizabeth would not reveal it: "What I saw there it is not fitting to tell; but know that I was in great felicity and I beheld marvellous secrets of God."

Other visions she had, though this was perhaps the most significant and characteristic, and during the time that she remained in the thankless and craven town, insulted in the streets, and spinning with her ladies for their daily bread, her soul was uplifted in the "perfect joy."

Even the hard old Duchess Sophia sickened at last of this long-protracted infamy, and Mathilda, the Abbess of Kitzingen, was informed of the condition of her niece. Devout as she was, this high lady, the sister of two queens, must have blazed into indignation. She instantly despatched her vassals to gather the children and convey them with Elizabeth to the abbey. Poor souls, what change could have been more like a foretaste of Paradise than the peaceful days (in the early summer I think it was) during which the light waggons rolled through the wide mountain-forests between Eisenach and the Main !

After a happy sojourn at Kitzingen, which now became the lifelong home of little three-year-old Sophia, Elizabeth visited her uncle Eckembert, the Prince-Bishop of Bamberg. He treated her with every consideration and sympathy ; but that eminent churchman was a man of the world and a dashing warrior ; he saw his niece in the flower of her youth and beauty, and he held

the Apostle's view that young widows should marry. Finally the Empress Yolande had died a month or two before ; Kaiser Frederick was crusading, in spite of the Pope, and winning such results by diplomacy as had never been achieved by the Christian sword. On his return, here was the wife for him ! To Castle Pottenstein in the Franconian mountains this fair niece, with her gentlewomen and a modest but becoming court, should go in the meantime.

To Pottenstein she went, Jutta and Isentrude with her ; but far from light-hearted, for Eckembert, with masterful good-humour and worldly wisdom twinkling (one pictures) in his strong ruddy face, had made no secret of the matter to her. Curious to imagine the sequel of such a marriage, had marriage been possible ! No man, certainly no princely man, in that age was a tithe so likely as Kaiser Frederick to understand and to be drawn to her spiritual nature ; and one wonders what effect her mysticism and passionate affection would have had upon

his poetic and speculative temperament. But marriage—Elizabeth would have none of it. No dispensation could release her heart or her conscience from the vows she made of her own free will ; and rather than submit to force she would disfigure herself so that men should shrink from her in horror.

She turned, as she ever did, in her disquietude to the relief of prayer, and the assurance of safety was borne in upon her. It was at this time that she visited the convent of the White Ladies at Erfurt, and Castle Andechs, the cradle of her mother's race, on the Holy Hill overlooking the Ammersee. The castle had been dedicated as a Benedictine monastery, and, doubtless with many thoughts of her mother, Elizabeth laid upon the altar her bridal robe and a silver cross containing, it was believed, relics of the instruments of the Passion. Suddenly a courier from the Prince-Bishop arrived at Pottenstein with a startling message recalling her to Bamberg.

Meanwhile the Crusader-pilgrims of Thur-

ingia had returned from the East. Landing at Brindisi, they fulfilled the promise made to their Landgrave that he should not be left in an alien land ; and gathering his bones, they bore them homeward. A pall of purple, which they had had woven in his honour, covered the bier ; a silver cross inlaid with gems was carried before it. So that train of bronzed knights and men-at-arms retraced the long way through Italy, across the snow mountains, and into the deep forests of Tyrol and Franconia.

At sundown they stopped at burg or city or monastery ; the coffer was laid in the church ; sacred candles were lit about it, and devout and faithful people spent the long night in vigil and prayer. All their way home no darkness ever rested on the dust of their Landgrave. On the morrow they heard an early Mass, made their offerings, and left the purple pall in behoof of the departed soul, using yet another in its stead.

At the tidings of their coming the Prince-Bishop had recalled Elizabeth ; and now as

they drew near, he sent nobles and worthy men to meet the pilgrims, in part for honour sake, in part to give her strength lest she should fail out of sorrow. The tolling of the muffled bells floated far away, beseeching for prayer. The people came in from all sides. Escorted by hooded monks and barefoot friars, chanting *Requiem* and *Dirige* ("for salutary and godly is prayer for the dead"), that glorious leader was brought to Bamberg, and laid in the great church there.

When Elizabeth stood beside the uncovered coffer, "I think," says Dietrich, "her sorrow came upon her all new, her heart ached, and her bones shuddered." But remembering God and quelling her anguish, she said: "I give thee thanks, O Lord, that Thou hast been pleased to grant Thy handmaid the great desire I had to behold the remains of my beloved, and in Thy compassion to comfort my afflicted soul. I do not repine that he was offered up by himself and by me for the relief of Thy Holy Land, although with all my heart I loved him. Thou knowest, O God,

that I would set his presence—most delightful to me—before all the joys and enchantments of this world, had Thy graciousness yielded him to me. But now I lay at Thy disposal him and me, as Thou wilt. Nay, though I could call him back at the cost of the smallest hair of my head, I would not call him back against Thy will.”

When she had said this, she was silent and restrained her rushing tears. Going forth from the church, she sat down in the green garth, and begged the noble pilgrims of Thuringia to come to her. When they came she made them sit down about her; and speaking to them with much love, she told them among other things of the wrongs and vexations she had endured. The Prince-Bishop also cried shame upon these grievances, and would not suffer Elizabeth to depart with them to Reinhartsbrunn, unless they were of a mind to see her righted. True men, who had ever been bound to her and their lord, the Crusaders pledged themselves to set in order the matter of her dowry and all that

pertained to her state as their lady. With Eckembert's blessing then, they resumed their sad journey, taking Elizabeth with them, and bearing their master to the resting-place of his desire.

If many came in from all sides at Bamberg, many more came now—counts and nobles, soldiers and burghers, and all manner of poor folk, for the whole of Thuringen-land was stirred at this home-coming. At Reinhartsbrunn, which Lewis loved above all religious houses, he was buried. His mother and his brothers, Heinrich and Conrad, saw him laid in his grave ; and “ how great a mourning there was, He alone knows who considereth sorrow.”

For him there was little cause to mourn. Measured by the tale of years, his life was brief, but it was filled with love and gladness, with high thought, with swift and chivalrous action, with honour, such as rarely fall within the lot of one man. They carved his image on his tomb in his coat of mail ; long-haired and beardless ; a Pater-noster clasp fastening

his mantle on his right shoulder ; on his breast a pilgrim shell ; his shield with the Lion before his body ; his sword in a broad belt at his right side—Lewis, Landgrave of Thuringia, Prince of Hesse, Count Palatine of Saxony.

When the funeral rites were ended three of the noble Thuringian Crusaders approached the Landgrave Heinrich. These were their names, “ to be held for all time in honoured remembrance ” : Rudolf von Varila the Cup-bearer, Lutolf von Berlstette, Hartmund von Erfa, and with them was the Sire Walther, Rudolf’s father. Others were called to witness, and while they stood round, Rudolf spoke : “ We have heard, and our minds are perturbed, and our faces are covered with confusion that such disgrace and disloyalty should be. Eya, my lord ! what have you done ? The sorrowing widow of your brother, a right noble king’s daughter, whom it was your behoof to console and have in honour, you, without cause, have bereft of her possessions, and driven out shelterless,

and left to beg in her need as though she were a vile creature. Your brother's little children, whom it was your duty to protect, have been parted from their mother and scattered abroad because of her indigence. Where then is your brother-love? How could a weak woman, a desolate widow, an afflicted exile withstand you? What harm could one so saintly have done you? Oh, shame! You have angered God, you have dishonoured yourself, you have confounded Thuringia, you have diminished your fair name; and truly we may well dread that the vengeance of God will overtake this land, unless you appease it by reconciliation with a lady so saintly."

Amazed were all the bystanders to hear this steadfast man speak so stalwart, and to see the young prince stand abashed and silent. As Rudolf finished, Heinrich broke into tears and answered, "For what has been done I am deeply sorry. Whatsoever my sister Elizabeth may desire, I will do to win her favour, and you shall judge."

"That, sir," said the Cup-bearer, "you

needs must do if you would escape God's wrath and make amends for what our lady has suffered."

When the Crusaders told Elizabeth of all that had taken place, "Castles," she said, "cities, burgs, domains which would involve and harass me, I will none of. But the revenues of my dowry which are my due, these I beg my brother to give me with goodwill, to have and to use and to spend freely for the welfare of my beloved and my own."

All eagerness to be at peace and in affection with her relatives, Elizabeth readily forgave them for all her sufferings. The questions affecting her state and revenues were settled, the rights of her boy to succeed his father as Landgrave of Thuringia and Hesse were recognized, and Elizabeth returned with three of her children to the Wartburg.

But when has the usurper ever kept faith ; or the wronger, forgiven, ever pardoned the forgiveness ?

The Broken Will

THE Crusader-pilgrims had dispersed to their homes. Heinrich, now Regent, was no longer menaced by their attachment to their dead leader and their indignant vindication of Elizabeth's rights. His own humiliation at Reinhartsbrunn rankled in his memory, but he was both subtle and cowardly enough to mask his malignity in mock-courtesy and smiling indifference. These were not lost upon the court at the Wartburg. The mere presence of a pure and exalted soul, to which the world was dross and the splendours of life a folly-pageant, was a perpetual rebuke and irritation to men and women intriguing for place, wealth, and pleasure.

That they slighted her, ceased to visit her, ignored her with malicious mockery when she addressed them, spoke with open laughter of

her crazy piety, was but the sequel to the Regent's cautious rancour. Even the meekness and cheerful patience with which she endured their contumely whetted their tongues : " Instead of gaily squandering the income which the Prince had left her, it would be more seemly if she wept for him."

On her arrival at the Wartburg she had been placed in a position suitable to her rank, but it was not long before Heinrich began to shuffle with the pledges which fear had wrung from him at Reinhartsbrunn. The provisions to which he had agreed were gradually ignored, and the Landgravine once more found her revenues curtailed and her means of subsistence threatened. For some time, however, the course of events had been watched by a pair of the most illumined eyes in Christendom. In the midst of his imperial struggles and world-politics, old Pope Gregory made time to write to her. Few would have suspected the wells of Elim in his temper of adamant, but the letters of the alert and masterful old man breathed the solicitude

and tenderness of a father. He encouraged her in the choice she had made of the things that pass not away, took her person and possessions under his tutelage, and appointed Master Conrad of Marburg as her protector. The Envoy Apostolic, who since the departure of Lewis for Palestine had been busied with the extirpation of heresy in Germany, reappeared at the Wartburg, and regulated the affairs of the Landgravine with a more drastic hand than the good soldiers at Reinhartsbrunn.

Castle Marburg, with the hamlet at the foot of its hill and the outlying villages, which was hers by marriage settlement, was ceded by the Regent, who engaged to refund five hundred marks which ought never to have been withheld. Every stone in the grey walls and towers of the Wartburg was dear to her, all the deep woods and sunny forest glades ; a year—such a year as one can imagine—had already gone by since her return, and “ she would have stayed longer, but that she wished for peace and seclusion ” ; she hoped for both

at Marburg, and for the last time she descended the rocky way, past the pillar where she had dropped the roses, past the stone where the horse had fallen with the playthings, past the asylum for the children and the lazar-house, to Eisenach and the street leading westward into the heart of St. Winfrid's country.

At Castle Marburg her relatives were unfriendly ; in the little hamlet there was no fit place for her. She went on to Wehrdathorpe on the pleasant banks of the Lahn, about a league away. She found a deserted cottage, and unwilling to be a burden to any, she made a shelter of leafy boughs around its hooded chimney for herself and her small household. Cheerfully they bore with her the season's difference, heat of the sun and blustering of rude winds, and the stinging smoke of the narrow space, until a poor home of wood and clay had been built for them at Marburg.

It was doubtless in the soft glowing days of this autumn of 1229 that Elizabeth dis-

covered that love of solitary places which enables us to associate the hills of Hesse with those of Umbria and Galilee. It was a new delight to her to pray and contemplate alone in a peaceful world, which seemed to have no limit but the blue heavens. Not far from the village of Schröck she discovered a track through the hilly woods which led to a spring, afterwards called by her name. The landscape so enchanted her that she had a causeway built through the woods to it, and near the well a small chapel, which a wise and gentle priest made his hermitage. Like enough it was during one of her wanderings through the woods and fields that she came to some cloister where the gilded images and rich adornments which the monks showed her in their church, drew from her the sharp comment, "You would have done better to lay out the cost on your dress and food rather than on your walls, for these images should be carried in your hearts." Thus, in the mind's eye, one seems to see her pace about these fields and hills continually; and to-day,

at least, is true what perchance the peasant folk merely fancied then, that as she goes, praying on her way in the open air, no thread of her garments is ever wet by rain falling.

Legend, too, has cast its glamour over an incident which may have occurred after the little household had removed to the lowly home of wood and clay at Marburg. It was one of Elizabeth's longings to build a church of dream-like beauty, from whose tall spire the silvery song of the bells should be heard far away, "lin-lan-lone," in Hungary. One day, while walking along the hill-side, "Just there," she cried, "I will build a church," and flung a stone which bounded down the slope, and came to rest on the reedy land near the river. The dream-church was never built, but upon the spot where the stone fell she built a Guest-House for the poor, and hard by a small chapel, both dedicated to St. Francis, who had just been canonized.

It was at this time, more exigently than at any other period in her devoted and visionary

life, that Elizabeth stood in need of a sympathetic and judicious adviser to control those burning and uncalculating impulses which tended more strongly every day to carry her not only above the innocent joys, but also beyond the responsibilities and duties of existence. One thinks how, in the far past, St. Lioba would have won her over to the lucid moderation and sweet conformity which shape to noblest purposes the use of those senses which God Himself created and called good, and those conditions of earth and time which Christ sanctified in His own person. One surmises, too, what a different aspect would have been presented by these closing years, had she been guided by the "poor man of Assisi," who forbade the wearing of shirts of mail and bands of iron, who took bread to a brother lying sleepless with hunger and ate it with him to the glory of God, who in a word bore that unmistakable stamp of the most Christ-like sanctity, that while he was cruel to himself he was all tenderness for others.

In her desire to follow as closely as she might in the footsteps of Our Lord, Elizabeth balanced in her mind the various Rules of Christian discipline of which she had any knowledge. The solitude and perfection of the cloister appeared to be beyond her. She chose literal and absolute poverty in the world, and besought Master Conrad to allow her to beg her bread from door to door. He refused to sanction a course which would expose her to gross humiliations and hardships exceeding her womanly strength. He directed her to surrender her will, to hold in contempt rank and wealth and pleasure and all mundane things, and so to chasten her affections that her children should be no dearer to her than other children.

To Elizabeth's ardent and ungrudging nature this seemed scarcely enough. "One thing at least," she said, "you can neither forbid nor hinder, for it was the bidding of the Lord Himself." Upon the day on which Christ died, when the altars in the churches are stripped and bare in memory of His

hanging naked on the cross, Elizabeth, in the presence of Master Conrad and other devout men, laid her hands upon the bare altar, and renounced of her own will her children and her parents and her kinsfolk and the pomps of this world, that so, denuded of all, she might follow Christ's footsteps in poverty and love. But when she would have divested herself of her possessions and revenues, Master Conrad restrained her; these she was to retain in order that she might pay any debts that her husband might have left, and have the means of bestowing alms upon the poor.

This occurred in the little Chapel of St. Francis, which she built beside the Guest-House of the Poor; and on this same Good Friday, 1230, I think it was that her beautiful black hair was shorn away, and she was clothed with the grey habit and the cord of the Brothers Minor; and ever afterwards she went with bare feet. At the same time Jutta too, who had been her playfellow in childhood and her inseparable companion in all her

sorrows, took the grey habit, so that they should never be divided.

But the children, the little children—the oldest seven, the youngest midway between two and three years old—the children who needed at their age nothing so much as a mother's love, Master Conrad suffered her to send away from her, because her love for them had become a snare spread for her soul. Hermann, the future Landgrave, and Sophia, who was betrothed to the boy-Duke of Brabant, were placed at Kreuzburg, to be brought up as became their station; Gertrude, the thanksgiving babe, the merry prattler with the loving ways and endless questionings of the two-year-old, was confided to the nuns at Altenberg.

The sick, the lepers, the aged, the poor, were now Elizabeth's sole care, as they had been—how long ago it seemed!—at the Wartburg. In her infinite pity for the poor she could not do enough for them. As soon as the Regent Heinrich refunded the five hundred marks as he had promised, she got messengers

to go out and gather together on a certain day all the poor and infirm in a circuit of twelve miles around Marburg. They came in dozens, in scores ; serfs and peasants, old and young, and among them, doubtless, the vagabonds and wanderers

“ From moor-side, hedge-side, hill-side and shaw ;
Sailors who never had seen the sea,
Soldiers who never had dreamt of war,
Blind bodies unco gleg o’ the e’e,
And all the dolorous singers o’ ballads.”

The Landgravine went among them, royal even in her grey habit and knotted cord, and bade them sit down, as the people sat long ago, “ on the green grass ” ; and warning was given that any one changing places or receiving twice, should have his or her hair cut off. In this manner the whole of the five hundred marks, a vaguely large sum, was distributed on a single day. That night, after the sturdy poor had departed to their homes, a number of infirm old people remained behind, and took shelter in nooks and corners of the Guest-House enclosure. Eliza-

beth saw them in the bright moonlight, and thinking how much greater their need than that of the others, not only made a second distribution, but sent them food, and had fires lit for them ; and when the pitiful folk began to sing out of sheer comfort, she exclaimed with some of her old childish gaiety, " Many a time I have said, we ought to make people merry."

During the distribution on the grass, however, a damsel named Hildegund, who knew nothing of the warning, and who, indeed, was passing on her way to an ailing sister, was brought as a culprit to the Landgravine. Elizabeth's decision was sharp and swift, and her hair was promptly cut off. It was beautiful and abundant hair, and Hildegund wept bitterly. As soon as Elizabeth was made aware of the mistake, she sent for the girl and asked whether she had ever thought of giving herself to God's service. " Long ago," replied Hildegund, " I should have gone into a convent, had it not been for that pretty hair."

“Then I am happier you have lost it,” said Elizabeth, “than if my boy were made Kaiser.”

At various times about two thousand marks were spent in alms, and in addition Elizabeth devoted to the poor all that remained of the costly things brought in her childhood from Hungary—vessels of gold and silver, embroidered silks, trinkets and jewels. Twice a day she attended to the worst cases of disease at the Hospital or Guest-House, but at length she was forbidden to do so by Master Conrad, who feared she might herself fall a victim to leprosy. Her alms, too, he limited to a single coin, and when she increased the value of the coin, stopped all money-giving; and when she had huge loaves baked, he confined her gifts to slices of bread, and finally forbade all charity. But the sight of the want and suffering which she could not relieve so moved her that she began herself to fall ill.

“In manifold ways,” says the Lady Isen-trude, “Master Conrad tried her constancy and strove to break her will. That he might

afflict her still more, he deprived her of those in the household who were dear to her. Then I, too, Isentrude whom she loved, was sent away, and she parted with me in great distress and with infinite tears. Last of all, Jutta, whom she loved most of all, was taken from her. Master Conrad (of pious memory) did this in good zeal and intent, because he feared we should talk with her of her bygone greatness and she would be tempted to regret. Besides, he thus withdrew from her any solace she might have in us, for he wished her to cling to God alone."

The place of these ladies was filled by a common serving-woman named Elizabeth, and Irmengarde, a Grey Sister. Through these she suffered much, for they spied upon her, and betrayed to Master Conrad any infringement of his rules restricting her works of mercy, and for each fault Master Conrad, "in good zeal and intent," punished her with stripes and slaps in the face. Such stripes, "once on a time," says Isentrude, "she chose out of great desire to bear, in

memory of our Lord's buffetings." Once on a time ! Nor were these gentle chastisements ; Master Conrad's ready corrections left marks which lasted for three weeks and more.

Ill, half-starved, beaten "in good zeal and intent" ! The poor will—the one faculty which God Himself gave free to man—was, I think, broken by a man at last. Even when Jutta and Isentrude came to visit her, she dared not speak to them or place food before them without leave asked.

The will was broken ; had the bright mirror of beatific visions been shattered too ? There seems some ground to hope not. "When Madam wept most," says Sister Irmengarde, "she was gladdest. It was a marvel to see her at once crying and rejoicing. And when she wept her face was not drawn or puckered, but serene and blithe, and the tears flowed as from a fountain." Reading this, one remembers the ecstasy in Lent in Isentrude's lap, and hopes.

Something at least remained of the sprightliness of bygone years. "It behoves us,"

she said after one of Master Conrad's punishments, too iniquitous to describe, "to bear such things gaily, for it is with us as with sedge when the stream is in fresh; it is bowed down and overwhelmed, but the flood water sweeps over without hurting it, and it springs up erect and strong." Once, too, when she was on her way to take counsel of the hermit at the well near Schröck and Master Conrad sent a message after her to come back, she remarked, "We are like the snail which withdraws into its house when it is going to rain. So we obey and draw out of the way we were going." Her fear of Master Conrad, however, was fear of him as the voice of God. "If I fear a mortal man so much," she once said, "how much more is the Lord Omnipotent to be feared, who is Lord and Judge of all." There was a time with Elizabeth when love left no room for fear.

These attendants who caused her so many trials she treated as her intimates, and would not suffer them to address her as "Madam"

or "My lady," but familiarly as "Thou" and "Elizabeth."

Notwithstanding the restrictions laid upon her, the Landgravine was still at liberty to spend herself in visiting the poor, and in works of compassion which did not greatly commend themselves to her companions. "How happy for us," she once said while attending to some sick beggar-lad, "thus to wash our Lord and to clothe Him." "Happy for you, perhaps," bluntly replied the serving-woman; "I don't know if it is for others."

This same *ancilla* Elizabeth had no high opinion of the Landgravine's table—"insipid and tasteless food; vegetables, colewort, cabbage and the like, for lack of better," occasionally smoked or "caught" in the boiling, for my lady would forget the pot in the midst of her devotions. And if there *should* chance to be something good and toothsome, she would run off with it to her sick in the Guest-House.

Her daily labour was spinning wool—"flax

she could not spin"—which was bought, rather below value, I fear, by the thrifty nuns of Altenberg. She was often ill, but she would make shift to spin in bed, and when the distaff was snatched away that she might have some rest, she would tease out wool for work some future day. A cold bed, too, it was in winter, because of the scanty coverings, but in hard frost she would "bury herself" for a little warmth between two wool-sacks, "lying on neither."

Her own clothing was in keeping with the rest of her surroundings. Her short grey woollen cloak she eked out with cloth of another colour; and in the same way she patched her worn sleeves—so different from the tight-fitting vanities of laced and pleated silk in the old days.

Thus, in her bare feet, she was surprised at her spinning-wheel by a noble Hungarian, Panian, who had heard of her fallen estate. He threw up his hand aghast, and "blessed" himself with the sign of the cross. "Never," he said, "was a king's daughter seen spinning

wool before." He offered to escort her to her royal home in the dear Magyar land. She shook her head gently ; she had chosen her lot ; she would not leave Thuringia lest she should imperil the future of her children. Mother-love, after all, had not been driven out, even with rods.

A Little Bird's Song

THE year 1231 was drawing to winter. Elizabeth had now been nearly two years in Marburg. It was in the last days of October. The weather was bitterly cold, with icy rains and biting winds. Her fragile body worn almost to a shadow, but upheld by her constant ecstasy of love and joy, she continued her devoted work among the sick and distressed.

One evening she returned to her poor abode, probably drenched with rain and chilled to the bone, certainly faint with hunger and overcome with weariness. That night she awoke, or seemed to wake, in the midst of a wondrous shining ; heard some one calling her ; beheld the very face and form of the Lord Jesus. Awake or sleeping, it was

the vision of the Shulamite in the walnut-gardens of Hermon :

“ The voice of my beloved ! . . .
 My beloved spake, and said unto me,
 Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

To Elizabeth it was no dream of the night, no beguilement of the senses, no illusion of the heart. Long ago that voice had promised that He would be ever with her, and she knew now that the time was near when she should be changed.

She went forth among her poor to help and solace them for the last time. In this rigorous weather Master Conrad too had fallen ill, and thought he would not recover. “ Madam and daughter,” he said when she visited him and they talked together, “ have you taken thought how you will order your life when I am dead ? ” “ For that,” she answered, “ I need take no thought,” and told him that her end was very near. Thereafter, on the fourth day, she fell into her last illness ; and for twelve days the life within her laboured

as the swallows labour in high winds, making the land of their migration.

It happened on a day as she lay with her face to the wall, her handmaid Elizabeth, sitting on the foot of the bed, heard the sound of the most sweet singing. In a little while the Landgravine turned over, saying, "Where is my darling?" for she called her companions "friend" and "darling." "I am here," said the handmaid, and added, "Oh, madam, you did sing sweetly." "Did you hear anything?" "Truly," replied the maid. "I will tell you," said Elizabeth; "between me and the wall some little bird sang to me most blithely; and I was so moved by its sweetness that I too had to sing."

Three days before her death she begged them not to allow any visitors to come into the room, not even the great ladies who frequently came to see her; "for," she said, when they questioned her, "I must think of my judgment-day and of my omnipotent Judge." On Sunday, the eve of the octave of St. Martin's Day—or rather it was when



Sunday midnight had gone by and matins had been said, Master Conrad came and heard her confession ; and when he asked her afterwards what she wished to have done with the things belonging to her, “ All those things I only seemed to own,” she said ; “ they belonged to the poor,” and she begged him to distribute them for her, excepting the coarse grey woollen habit in which she besought them to bury her. She would make no will, for the only heir she desired to have was Christ in His poor.

At prime, in the dark of the morning, she received the Blessed Sacrament, which she begged to have ; and all that day until the vesper hour she lay absorbed in devotion. Sometimes she spoke, and once—after she had stood in spirit, as I think, beside that brave young figure sculptured on the tomb at Reinhartsbrunn—she related how the Lord Jesus had comforted Martha and Mary by raising their brother Lazarus to life, and dwelt upon His tender compassion when, weeping with them weeping, He shed tears of sorrow for the

dead. Then those around her heard most sweet voices singing, though her lips never moved.

From twilight onward her time was spent in prayer. As it grew to cock-crow she suddenly asked, "What should we do if the Enemy of Mankind were to appear before us?" Then, in a little while she cried out in a loud, clear voice, as though repelling the Spirit of Evil, "Away! away!" At the first crowing of the cock she appeared to revive. "The hour is near," she said, "when the Lord was born. Let us talk of God and the Infant Jesus, for it is near midnight, when He came into the world, and lay still in the manger, and created by His omnipotence a new star which no one had ever seen before." While she said these things she was most lively and bright, as though she ailed nothing. Indeed, she herself said, "I am very weak, but I do not feel any sickness or pain."

In such wise she passed all that day, uttering her devout thoughts, and rejoicing in God, and commending those around her to

His keeping. Then at last, falling still at night, and her head drooping as if in slumber, the most innocent and sweet spirit in the world at that time returned unto God who gave it.

For three days, because of the strong desire of the people that she should not be buried until they had seen her face once more, she was laid in the little chapel attached to the Guest-House of the Poor. There was no horror of the grave, but in its stead the tenderness of youthful sleep, and except for paleness a sweeter beauty in death than there had long been in life. On the evening of the third day, while the Brothers Minor chanted the Office of the Dead, the Abbess of Wechere, who was present, heard a marvellous lyri-bliring of birds, and wondering exceedingly how this was possible in the winter cold, she went out of the chapel, and beheld a great flock of small birds settled upon the roof and singing, as it were, her dirge. It was in like fashion, when St. Francis died and

the brethren were still gazing upon his face, that larks innumerable dropped down and sang joyfully on the thatch of his cell.

On the fourth day, amid a vast concourse of abbots, priests, religious men and women, and people of all kinds, she was laid in earth. She died on the 19th November, 1231, scarce twenty-four years old.

Miracles were wrought at her grave ; as well might be, yet none so memorable as that of her own life. Master Conrad of Marburg began to collect the proofs of sanctity required for the enrolment of her name in the Calendar of the Saints. The task dropped from his hand unfinished ; it was taken up and completed by others.

The Kaiser's Crown

ON the 25th May, 1235, at the Dominican convent in Perugia, all the official proofs of the sanctity of Elizabeth, daughter of the King of Hungary and Landgravine of Thuringia, were scrutinized at a consistory over which Pope Gregory himself presided. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had consoled her husband's last moments, the Patriarch of Antioch, and a throng of cardinals, archbishops, and bishops declared with one voice that her name should be enrolled among the names of the blessed with God.

On the following day, the Feast of Pentecost, amid the splendour of one of the most august solemnities of the Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, enthroned and wearing his gold-encircled mitre, pronounced her canonization, and appointed the day of her migration from

this earthly light to be observed each year with reverence in the universal Church. Then laying aside his mitre, the wonderful old man, now drawing towards his hundredth year, rose and intoned the *Te Deum*. Organ and choir took up the glorious hymn, and the joy-bells pealed out the tidings to the Umbrian hills hallowed by the feet of St. Francis. If the voice of earthly praise becomes a living thing in heaven, as some old mystic thought, perchance this song of joy met and embraced the *Te Deum laudamus* which went up in the winter night from the church of the Grey Friars at Eisenach.

The Bull proclaiming her canonization to the world was issued on the first day of June. It was acclaimed with great rejoicing throughout Germany, and the wonderful and moving story of her life and death attracted pilgrims from far and near to her grave at Marburg. If any saint could help the myriad forms of sickness and grief, care and need upon earth, it must be this young and beautiful princess, who had herself known so many sorrows, and

who through all her short life had given herself and all she possessed to the poor and suffering.

Doubtless it was never intended that the lowly chapel, before the altar of which she reposed, should be her final resting-place, and very little time elapsed before the constant succession of pilgrims seeking her intercession, and the many offerings they left in her honour, suggested a larger sanctuary. Her brother-in-law Conrad, whose turbulent nature appears to have been touched with visitings of grace, had taken no small part in promoting her canonization. With the assistance of the clergy he now resolved to build a church worthy to be her shrine. Around the little chapel, and upon the very spot marked by the stone she threw for her intended church, were drawn the lines for the new edifice, and on the eve of the Assumption (August 14th) he laid the first stone.

The name of the master-builder is unknown, but in the course of time there arose one of those Alleluias in buoyant stone, enriched

with glowing glass and storied imagery, of which I have spoken. The Church of St. Elizabeth is the first example in Germany of that spirit of light and of upspringing worship which found expression in the cathedrals of Amiens and Salisbury.

May Day in the following year (1236) was appointed for the translation of the sacred remains. "Such and so great a concourse was there out of divers nations, peoples, and tongues," says Dietrich, "as in these German lands scarce ever was gathered together before, or will ever be again." Assuredly no such throngs of princes and nobles, townspeople and peasants, 200,000 it was computed, had been beheld in their days by the villagers about the base of the Castle Hill. The Kaiser Frederick was there, crowned indeed but barefooted and clad in coarse grey woollen, and with him came his bride, Isabella, daughter of King John of England and niece of Cœur de Lion.

"The earth of that most holy little body" was removed from its resting-place, wrapped

in costly purple, and laid in a richly decorated coffin of copper gilt ; and the Kaiser helped to bear it to the place where it was to be laid for the veneration of the multitude. When the "Office" or special prayers and hymns in the Saint's honour had been sung, Frederick was the first to pay homage and make his offering. Placing on her head a massive crown of gold, "Since I could not crown her empress while she lived," he said, "now I will crown her an immortal queen in the kingdom of God."

Then taking by the hand her son Hermann, a brave lad of twelve or more, he led him to his dead mother's side, and the Empress Isabella did the like with her little girls. After them came the Duchess Sophia and her sons—Heinrich the usurper, Conrad touched with visitings of grace ; and these were followed by princes and barons with their beautiful and scornful women ; brutal counsellors, men of violence and time-servers, who had treated her with contumely ; the townspeople who had left her to the wind

and the sleet ; the poor who forgot how she had gone hungry that she might feed them. Under the thrill and ache of an immense emotion these were now weeping. Ladies stripped themselves of their jewels to lay at her feet ; princes heaped gold and gems about her ; the serf offered his hoarded doit. She whom in life St. Francis might have taken for my Lady Poverty lay in her coffin crowned, clothed in purple strewn with a king's revenue. What a mockery, not of the dead, but of the living !

In that vast gathering there was surely a little knot of men whose eyes were wet and who had no cause to blush—Rudolf the Cup-bearer, his grey old father the Sire Walther, and certain Crusaders who had brought the Landgrave's dust from the shores of the Adriatic.

The coffin, enclosed in a shrine of silver covered with carvings, was laid upon the altar of the little chapel, and the walls of the great church rose about it with pointed arch and lofty column. Thirteen years later it

was removed, so that the choir might be built over the site of the chapel. It was next placed in its own beautiful sanctuary, the St. Elizabeth Chapel, in the north transept. Thirty-four years more went by, and on May Day, 1283, the church was consecrated. Yet again seven years and Mass was celebrated for the first time at the high altar. It was four-and-fifty years since Conrad, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, had laid the first stone. The centenarian Pontiff, Kaiser Frederick, King Andreas of Hungary, Conrad himself, the last of the male line of the Iron Landgrave—all indeed whose figures pass through these pages, except Gertrude, the thank-offering babe—had flitted from the high stage of the world like the shadows of a pageant.

All the while, around her couch a-flower with miracles (*lectulum miraculis floridum*, writes Dietrich), came the blind and the dumb, the deaf and the lame, demoniacs and lepers, shipwrecked sailors and men who had pined in dungeons, people smitten with

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disease, people in need and in danger, seeking relief, ay, and finding it in God's mercy ; and so, through the centuries, feet and knees wrote their dim story of distress and of faith in the hollows you may still see worn in the stones of her chapel at Marburg. One piece of money, at the least, was minted in her honour, and one gold coin or medal bore her likeness. The rock-rose, whose yellow blossom shines out from among its shrubby leaves from July to September, became Elizabeth's flower ; and to this day one of the old main roads leading to Marburg is the Pilgrims-way.

Shadows of Old Time

ONE by one the little group of men and women who lived seven hundred years ago pass away into the shadows of old time.

For a brief moment the young Prince Hermann stands in clear light. It was at the court of St. Louis. Something of the sweetness of his mother, of the gallant bearing of his father must have been visible in the lad. Moved by the look of him, Blanche of Castile, the Queen-Mother, kissed him on the forehead: "she had heard that many a time his mother had kissed him there." On the 3rd January, 1240—one imagines amid what New Year gaieties—he died poisoned by the Lady Bertha von Sebeche; seventeen years old; shortly after assuming his rank as Landgrave; at Kreuzburg, where he was born.

In his last moments he begged to be laid near his mother at Marburg. Heinrich the usurper, who was charged with his murder, had him buried instead at Reinhartsbrunn, "fearful lest she should quicken him in his grave."

There was no one now to dispute Heinrich's claim to the title. In the struggle between Pope and Emperor, he was elected King of the Romans in 1246. He worsted Conrad, Kaiser Frederick's son, but in the next encounter was struck down by an arrow, fled to the Wartburg, and died there in 1248, if that be a relief to any one.

In 1242, at the age of eighteen, Sophia, St. Elizabeth's first daughter, married Henry the Magnanimous, Duke of Brabant, and had a little son, known afterwards as Henry the Child. On the death of the "King of the Romans" at the Wartburg, Henry of Hesse (the Illustrious, as he came to be called), son of sister Agnes of Misnia, seized Thuringia; but Sophia of Brabant barred his claim, on behalf of the Child, then five years old.

Some fierce scrimmaging having left matters much as they were, Hesse was provisionally ceded to the Child and Thuringia to the Illustrious, until the Kaiser could give a decision. The peace was of brief duration, and in the next clash of arms Lady Sophia came down in a whirlwind, hewing at the closed gate of St. George at Eisenach and leaving axe-cuts in the tough oak visible two hundred years afterwards. Through this gate Klingsohr had ridden, and St. Elizabeth had been borne in her silver cradle. The Árpád blood ran hot in Sophia's veins, but in the end (1263) the Illustrious got Thuringia, and Hesse fell to the Child. Sophia died in 1282.

It was apparently in the year of St. Elizabeth's death that her brother-in-law Conrad came into collision with his Grace of Mainz, in the wild scene which Carlyle has described so vividly. The Archbishop had laid a tax on all the abbeys in the diocese. Reinhartsbrunn, founded by the Landgraves, was exempt from all imposts, and Conrad forbade

the Abbot to pay. “ Abbot refused accordingly ; but was put under ban by the Pope ; obliged to comply, and even to be ‘ whipt thrice ’ before the money could be accepted. Two whippings at Erfurt, from the Archbishop, there had been ; and a third was just going on there, one morning, when Conrad, travelling that way, accidentally stepped in to matins. Conrad flames into a blazing whirlwind at the phenomenon disclosed. ‘ Whip my Abbot ? And he *is* to pay, then — Archbishop of Beelzebub ? ’—and took the poor Archbishop by the rochets and spun him hither and thither ; nay, was for cutting him in two, had not friends hysterically busied themselves and got the sword detained in its scabbard and the Archbishop away.” Conrad was at this time about eight-and-twenty ; had married a daughter of Kaiser Frederick’s, and she was dead or died soon after. This quarrel was fortunately composed ; but a year or two later, on gross provocation, Conrad burnt down Fritzlar, sheep-pen to spire ; the sequel to which was

excommunication, and eventually absolution on condition that Conrad should rebuild Fritzlar and join a religious Order. Such a hold on princes had the wonderful old Pope, close upon his hundredth year! Conrad took the vows of the Teutonic Knights; laid, as we have seen, the foundation of St. Elizabeth's Gothic *Te Deum*; became Grand Master of his Order, and died at last in 1253.

Sophia the Younger became Abbess of Kitzingen, in far-away succession to Winfrid's kinswoman, Theckla of Wimborne.

Gertrude, the thank-offering babe reared in the cloisters of Altenberg, near Wetzlar, and apparently but twenty-two when she was elected Abbess, was still ruling there (*usque hodie*) when Dietrich began to write his *De Vita Beatæ Elisabethæ* in 1289.

The "stern old knight and lord," Walther von Varila, is dimly discernible, in 1248, in a stormy but brief tussle for justice and right with certain Counts of Schwarzburg and Kefernberg, and so fares into the twilight of things. Strange that he should have brought

her in her silver cradle, and have knelt before her silver shrine.

After St. Elizabeth's death Magister Conrad of Marburg appears to have resumed his duties as Chief Inquisitor in Germany. King Henry, the shifty son of Kaiser Frederick, had favoured the savage persecutions which had been pursued for a number of years. A great diet was convened by Master Conrad at Mainz in 1233 to dispose of an accumulation of heresy charges. Bitter resentment was smouldering into flame at the reckless precipitation with which the Inquisitor dealt out his judgments. On pretext of heresy, it was averred, many unhappy victims—"noble and simple, monks, nuns, burghers, and peasants"—were hurried to a cruel death; for, "refusing to allow any appeal, he had them executed on the same day that they were accused." At Mainz the Count von Saym demanded a delay for his defence, and it seems to have been conceded; but many of the accused did not appear, and Master Conrad bestowed the Crusader's Cross on all

who would take up arms against them. A small band of those whose lives were in jeopardy waylaid him and slew him as he was returning to Marburg on the 30th of July.

One wonders how often a man has, "in good zeal and intent," done more mischief on God's earth in God's name.

In the same year as St. Elizabeth, or possibly as late as 1235, died Walther von der Vogelweide, whose name recalls the goodly inn and its garden in Eisenach, and the prophecy of Klingsohr. Kaiser Frederick ennobled him, giving him a sufficient estate near Würzburg, where he died, and was buried in the cloister of the New Minster, under the same roof as blessed Killian from "green Eire in the sea." Sweet-hearted singer of the highest Love, and lover of the green world and his small kinsfolk in feathers, he left a bequest for corn to be scattered at his tomb for the birds each day at noon. As he too fades away, the shadow of a great

name, the cadence of one of his songs floats down to me :

“ I see, World,—thus am I requited !
 Thou snatchest what 'didst give whilere.
 I, and the Songs that so delighted,
 We quit thee now, all stripped and bare.

“ A thousand times, both soul and senses
 I staked in thy concernment ; yet
 Grown old, the mock of thy pretences,
 Thou laughest, now when I regret.

.

“ Quit Earthly-love, it breaks in pieces ;
 For that love longing, thou shalt rue ;
 Hold dear the love which never ceases,
 God's-love, the steadfast and the true.”

Postscript

I CANNOT close these pages without acknowledging my indebtedness to two delightful books on the subject, the *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth* (1836) by the Comte de Montalembert, who was so interestingly connected with the Saint, and *Sainte Elisabeth de Hongrie* (1901) by M. Emile Horn, who has taken advantage of the results of recent German research. At many points I have, however, been unable to accept either the views or the sentiments of these distinguished writers, and I have ventured to follow the mediæval records read in the light of modern historians. In particular, I can discover no reason for adopting M. Horn's conclusion that, in the first instance, St. Elizabeth was betrothed to the boy Hermann, whom he regards as the eldest son of the Landgrave Hermann, and that, after his death, the question of returning Elizabeth's dowry was the cause of her betrothal to Lewis. Such a train of events could hardly have passed unknown to the early writers, and there was no reason for suppressing the account of them if they happened.

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The attempt to explain the character and life of St. Elizabeth by the character and life of St. Francis of Assisi is, I trust, sufficiently justified by the statements in the text. The triumph of what may be called regularized asceticism, based at that time almost wholly on personal dread of perdition, destroyed one of the noblest, and perhaps the most noble, of the large spiritual movements in the history of the Church.

The memorial Church of St. Elizabeth still survives in its pure Gothic beauty on the banks of the Lahn at Marburg. After the damage caused by the floods of 1847 it was restored, and during the work it was found necessary to remove the monument of Conrad, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, and brother-in-law of St. Elizabeth. Beneath this monument was discovered a sculptured slab, and below it another, which covered a stone coffin. In this last lay a leaden chest which contained what were believed to be the relics of St. Elizabeth. Permission to examine them was refused by the authorities, and they were at once committed again to the earth.

From its deposition in the memorial chapel the shrine of the Saint appears to have been for nearly three centuries the centre of a widespread veneration and pilgrimage. On Sunday, May 18th, 1539, Philip

the Magnanimous forcibly entered the railed enclosure and removed the relics. Nine years later, on the 12th of July, the shrine and relics were restored, but the massive gold crown of Kaiser Frederick had disappeared. The remains appear to have been secretly buried by the Teutonic Knights, but the record of the spot, preserved only by oral tradition, became vague and uncertain. About the year 1718 a small chest, said to be of iron, was found near the tomb of Conrad the Grand Master. It was supposed to contain the relics of the Saint, and was at once replaced. Of the interval between that date and the restoration of the church nothing is known (Horn, pp. 268-75).

The following notes are given here to prevent interruption of the narrative :

Page 74. The lines may be roughly translated—

“From Thy cross, oh, grant me breath,
 Strengthen me, to mourn Thy death
 All the days that I shall live.
 Let me share Thy wounds with Thee,
 And infold Thee on Thy tree,
 Giving all that Love can give.”

Page 124. Biblical plays are as old as St. Gregory Nazianzen (+ 389 or 390). Draper (*Intellectual Development of Europe*) describes them as brought from Constantinople by the Crusaders. Their influence,

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he says, was prized so highly by the Italian authorities that the Pope (no name or date) granted a thousand days' indulgence to any who attended them. The Miracle-play was acted in England at least as early as 1119.

Page 173. "Unco gleg o' the e'e," prodigious sharp of the eye.

Page 180. Hungarian scholars appear to have had some trouble with "Panian," the name of Elizabeth's distinguished visitor, and it has been suggested that the real name was Bánffy, Panyas, Ponych or Ponith. Is it possible that Dietrich, mistakenly or otherwise, wrote "Pan Ian," meaning Sir Ion or Sir John?

Page 189. Pope Nicholas I (858-67) added to the ordinary episcopal mitre a circle of gold as a symbol of his civil authority; a second circle was added by Pope Boniface VII (1294-1303), and the triple crown was completed by Pope Urban V (1362-70).

Page 200. See *Frederick the Great*, Vol. I, chap. VI, page 85. But surely "not to matins," nor yet "by the rochets." And surely, too, historian has seldom summarized with more hasty flippancy than Carlyle in the following outline of the life of St. Elizabeth (*loc. cit.*): "His (Conrad's) worthy elder brother was Husband of the lady since called

Saint Elizabeth, a very pious but also very fanciful young woman ;—and I always guess his going on the Crusade, where he died straightway, was partly the fruit of the life she led him ; lodging beggars, sometimes in his very bed, continually breaking his night's rest for prayer and devotional exercise of undue length ; 'weeping one moment, then smiling in joy the next' ; meandering about, capricious, melodious, weak, at the will of devout whim mainly." A young woman, O "true Thomas," of whom, as your devout admirer believes, you would have written very differently had you been concerned to know more about her.

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